



Radina Vučetić

# Coca-Cola Socialism

*Americanization of Yugoslav  
Culture in the Sixties*

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## COCA-COLA SOCIALISM





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*Americanization of Yugoslav  
Culture in the Sixties*

RADINA VUČETIĆ  
Translated by JOHN K. COX



Central European University Press  
Budapest–New York

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First published in Serbian as Koka-kola socijalizam  
by JP Sluzbeni glasnik in 2012.

English translation © 2018 John K. Cox

Published in 2018 by

Central European University Press

Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000

Fax: +36-1-327-3183

E-mail: [ceupress@press.ceu.edu](mailto:ceupress@press.ceu.edu)

Website: [www.ceupress.com](http://www.ceupress.com)

224 West 57th Street, New York NY 10019, USA

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Translated by John K. Cox

Cover design by Goran Ratković

ISBN 978-963-386-200-1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Vucetic, Radina, author. | Cox, John K., 1964–, translator.

Title: Coca-cola socialism : Americanization of Yugoslav culture in the sixties /  
Radina Vucetic.

Other titles: Koka-kola socijalizam. English

Description: Budapest ; New York : Central European University Press, 2018. |  
Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017050566 (print) | LCCN 2017057785 (ebook) | ISBN  
9789633862018 | ISBN 9789633862001

Subjects: LCSH: Popular culture—Yugoslavia. | Popular culture—United States.  
| Nineteen sixties. | Socialism and culture—Yugoslavia. | Communism and culture—Yugoslavia. | Popular culture and globalization—20th century. | Yugoslavia—Civilization. | Yugoslavia—Relations—United States. | United States—Relations—Yugoslavia.

Classification: LCC DR1228 (ebook) | LCC DR1228 .V8313 2018 (print) | DDC  
306.09497/09046—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017050566>

Printed in Hungary by  
Prime Rate Kft., Budapest

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# Foreword

There is no part of the world, regardless of its remoteness, system, or ideology, where American influences have not left their mark in a lasting way, and, consequently, Americanization, in the broadest meaning of that concept, is one of the processes that characterize the twentieth century. Evidence of this is in the omnipresent “materialization” of Americanization, epitomized by Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, Levi’s jeans, and Marlboro cigarettes, but no less so as well in American cultural values and technological accomplishments of deep reach and broad scope, which also were a global value in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the novels of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, or William Faulkner, films like *Casablanca*, *The Great Dictator*, or *Citizen Kane*, the music of George Gershwin and John Cage, the philosophy of Herbert Marcuse, the paintings of Andy Warhol, the courageous pioneering work of the feminist Betty Friedan, and Microsoft and Apple. And, as is the case with all general and generally accepted values, whether they’re values of everyday life or of cultural, scientific, or technological import, they do not necessarily require adjectives to explain them in a more detailed way; for instance, it’s not necessary to add to Coca-Cola that it is an “American drink,” to *Casablanca* that it’s an “American film,” to Microsoft that it is an “American corporation that works in computer technology,” or to Andy Warhol that he was an “American painter,” for these things are simply understood. In this regard, Americanization wasn’t, and still isn’t, simply the offering of “something American”; rather it is also its acceptance, as well as its unique adaptation.

When I began working on the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture, I didn't consider the extent to which I myself was Americanized—in part because I was not born in the 1960s, years that were the focus of my research, and in part because I had made no attempt earlier to conceive of my own identity in those terms. Years spent in working on Americanization, however, did lead me to that kind of “introspection,” as well as to the reconsideration not only of the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture but also the Americanization of everyone who grew up in socialist Yugoslavia.

All of us who grew up in, and were formed by, a specific socialist country were children of both socialism and Coca-Cola. To put this more precisely, we were the children of Coca-Cola socialism. Two incompatible things, communist ideology and the symbol of capitalism, went together to a considerable extent in the case of Yugoslavia. Even in the earliest period of my youth, right after my departure from the maternity ward, so to speak, I was “marked” forever by American education—my young parents raised me according to the ideas of Dr. Benjamin Spock, adopting from him a liberal conception of childhood education, accompanied by a maximum of respect for children's individuality. And Americanization continued to characterize the rest of my time growing up—Disney films found comprised an unavoidable part of my childhood, and even in my youth, when I loved European film, American movies were, however, always in first place.

My youth in Yugoslav socialism passed to the sounds of rock and roll, but to the accompaniment of the heritage of Americanized daily life—I twirled a hula-hoop, drank Coke, waited in line at the newly opened McDonald's, experiencing, in the 1980s, as a real prize one of the cans of Coca-Cola in which we, the children of socialism, stored our pencils. From my earliest days I was also Americanized by literature. My favorite children's book was *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh, while J.D. Salinger left indelible traces on my development with his *Catcher in the Rye*. As I grew up and went through different phases, my views were changed by reading Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Kerouac, Updike, and Miller.

A childhood and youth of this type differed little, or not at all, from those of the friends who grew up with me. We were all, even as children and young people, “infected” for the long run with American culture. At that time, I was not, of course, aware that growing up in

Moscow, for instance, or in Budapest, Sofia, or Bucharest, didn't look the same.

Besides memories and the attitudes of the Americanization of my own childhood, youth, and life up to now, a much stronger motivation for my engagement with Americanization was the scholarly significance of researching a theme such as this, because the study of the Americanization that, as a global process, played out in the Yugoslav space, offers insight into various views on the cultural, social, and also, indirectly, the political life of Yugoslavia in the 1960s.

In the circumstances of the Cold War, and especially because of Yugoslavia's balancing act between the superpowers, that process had in Yugoslavia, along with hallmarks of a global nature, also specific characteristics. Of course it could not make of Yugoslavia a country similar to the United States or change its citizens in that direction, but it could show a different kind of life and also stoked desires for it. In that sense, Americanization in Yugoslavia was a unique meeting of values from one part of the world with people whose eyes had been opened to those values but who did not always possess the possibilities for their realization.

Influences on popular culture and daily life were, over the course of the Cold War, a powerful instrument of foreign policy of both West and East, in the struggle for "hearts and minds," and Yugoslavia represented, given its specific position between East and West, the ideal ground for that struggle. In this "cultural Cold War," in which America "offered" jazz and rock, Hollywood films, abstract expressionism, avant-garde theater, and Coca-Cola and the products of mass consumption, employing them as weapons in the Cold War, the citizens of Yugoslavia benefited, precisely because their country found itself in a position between East and West (or, to be more exact, both in the East and in the West), especially when compared to the citizens of countries behind the "Iron Curtain."

Thanks to Americanization, Yugoslav society developed through the acceptance of the codes of Western culture and Western values. The principle of freedom, although it reached Yugoslavia with more limits and not by way of a multi-party system with freedom of speech and action, but instead via American popular culture, produced the acceptance of the essence of the meaning of the word freedom, which, even with many restrictions, fundamentally altered Yugoslav society.



The English-language edition of *Coca-Cola Socialism* is actually the third life of this study. The book *Koka-kola socijalizam*, published in Belgrade in 2012, originated as my doctoral dissertation, which I wrote under the mentorship of Professor Milan Ristović and defended at the University of Belgrade in 2011. The book has gone through four editions in the Serbian language, and the phrase “Coca-Cola socialism” has entered public discourse and become unavoidable in reexaminations and evaluations of socialist Yugoslavia.

Many colleagues and friends, each in his or her own way, helped me in the work on my doctoral thesis and in the preparation of this book. I owe my biggest debt of gratitude to Professor Milan Ristović, who led and guided me wisely with his advice, and who was my solid support in many dilemmas. I am especially grateful as well to late Professor Andrej Mitrović, with whom I began this work, who “introduced” me to the topic of Americanization, and who always showed understanding for my interests and my predilection for cultural history. One might say that Professor Andrej Mitrović led me to this topic by relying on the best understandings of the spirit of freedom and democracy in America.

My students also deserve great thanks. Their observations often assisted me in (re)formulating my thoughts, and their wide-ranging interests exposed me to many intriguing phenomena from the most varied fields of history and popular culture.

As always, I owe a debt of boundless gratitude to my friends. Alexandra Todorović, Callum Campbell, Marija Kalabić, Anja Suša, Marko Miljković, and Kokan Mladenović were at my side in various ways and in various places, from Belgrade, Istria, and Budapest to the Alps and London.

More than to anyone else, however, I am grateful to my family—to my parents Ljiljana and Milenko and my daughter Milja, who have always stood by me and offered the greatest help possible. I don’t know whether I’ve succeeded in telling and showing them how much this means to me.

RADINA VUČETIĆ  
Belgrade, June 2017



# Introduction

What is the first thing that comes to mind when we think about America? The answer to this question is, of course, subjective, but even to the biggest antagonist of America the first associations would be Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Disneyland, Levi's jeans, the gigantic letters of the Hollywood sign above Los Angeles, or the image of the modern cowboy on a horse from the Marlboro ads. America is much more than the stereotypical "materializations" of any sort, but it is precisely by means of these stereotypes, as symbols of the American way of life, that America has constructed and built up its image as it grew into the leading power of the twentieth century.

Parallel to the rise of America as a world power, the process of the Americanization of the world also unfolded; it influenced politics, economics, technology, and culture, as well as on the behavior and the system of values of societies and states all over the planet. Even the very word "Americanization" stirs passions as well as its counterpart "anti-Americanism," by which opponents and critics of Americanization want to refute its reach and values. Anti-Americanism, of course, has its stereotypical "materializations" as well, including the fate of the Indians, Hiroshima, multinational corporations, American military interventions. However, the latter for the most part serves as a political or moral point of view and a framework for discussion, whereas Americanization is an everyday occurrence and a part of the life of ordinary people. The success of Americanization lies, perhaps, in the fact that its symbols do not exclude anti-Americanism, as often even the most radical opponents of America enjoy its stereotypes by drinking Coca-Cola or

smoking U.S.-made cigarettes. Neither Americanization nor anti-Americanism leaves anyone indifferent, and both terms open up questions about the influence of one of the world's great powers on global reality.

From among the abundance of definitions of Americanization, most precise is the one by which Americanization is seen as encompassing the series of processes by which America exercises its influences on the rest of the world; above all these are cultural influences, which "recipients" borrow, imitate, or simply accept.<sup>1</sup> The Free Dictionary defines Americanization as the imitation of that which is American in form, style, and character; assimilation into American culture; or falling under American influence or control.<sup>2</sup> Webster's dictionary defines Americanization as the desire to become American in character, mannerisms, or looks as well as adapting to American customs and way of life.<sup>3</sup>

The word Americanization has been in use since the end of the eighteenth century, and initially was used to describe the creation of the common culture of the new colonies and the production of a common American identity. This explains why until the 1920s people understood Americanization to mean the cultural assimilation of various ethnic and religious groups in the United States.<sup>4</sup> However, Americanization had gained another meaning at the end of the nineteenth century, a meaning that showed that the concept was crossing the borders of America itself. The German philologist Emil Heinrich Du Bois-Reymond used the concept of Americanization in order to praise the progress of American technology, but he also expressed his anxiety about America because of its threat to "European culture." Thus, even at that time the feeling existed that the United States was a paradigm of a modern capitalist country in which what was expected at home already existed.<sup>5</sup>

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a more complex approach to Americanization in the views of the British journalist,

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<sup>1</sup> Kroes, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall*, x-xi.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/americanization>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/americanization>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/americanize>.

<sup>4</sup> Marling, *How American Is Globalization?*, 195.

<sup>5</sup> Šnel, ed., *Leksikon savremene kulture*, 23.

William T. Stead,<sup>6</sup> who recognized that Americanization was a trend that would come to characterize an entire century. He hinted at his vision of Americanization and anticipated its direction in his 1902 book, titled *Americanization of the World or the Trend of the Twentieth Century*. In this work, he described the trends of Americanization and the ways in which it spread and won followers. Stead viewed Americanization as the “export” of American material goods and the rise of American technology, but also as the spread of American literature, art, science, music, and sport, and he was the first person to offer, at the outset of the twentieth century, a view of American culture that was different from standard European conceptions. Stead criticized the conventional wisdom that “Americans know how to produce hogs and corn, but not superior works of art,” citing high American cultural spheres of activity. In literature, he singled out Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe, and, as for American journalism he asserted that it had no equal, pointing out top newspapermen such as Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.<sup>7</sup> And in American music he recognized new qualities, predicting its “future triumphs.” He emphasized both the momentum in American painting, judging that it was just about to begin playing a major role, and the successes of American architecture.<sup>8</sup> Writing about American highways, machinery, and technical accomplishments that improved the daily lives of individuals, Stead foresaw in his day, almost prophetically, not only the directions Americanization would take but also the foreign policy of the United States in the twentieth century. In fact, everything that this British journalist mentioned at the beginning of the century manifested itself in the following decades—jazz and rock and roll changed the world forever, American abstract expressionism and pop art became the leading artistic trends in the second half of the century, and the rise of the consumer society, engineered in America,

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<sup>6</sup> W.T. Stead (1849–1912) was a pioneer of British investigative journalism, a pacifist, and a fighter for the idea of a “United States of Europe.” He died on the *Titanic*, while journeying to America. See Stead, *Americanization of the World*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 276–85, 291–300, 304.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 304–17.

ensured that the American way of life became the dream for many people across the planet.

The 1920s saw the continued progress of this process. At that time emerged the ideas that Americanization had as its goal “spreading the ideals of democracy” and that the American people should be “the interpreter of democracy in the world.”<sup>9</sup> These were the first direct identifications of the political dimension of Americanization. In the 1920s, the United States began to “export” its popular culture more intensively—Hollywood grew into the world leader in the production of films, and jazz and radio developed apace, as did the self-service grocery store, Coca-Cola, and the automobile industry. From the European point of view, America was viewed as the land of prosperity and infinite economic possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

Another boost to Americanization, this time with a strong ideological coloration, came after 1945, when, parallel to the economic and political strengthening of America as one of the superpowers, the battle was joined against America’s ideological enemy—communism. As one of the means of waging this fight, there were more and more efforts to make the world want the American way of life, and to present the American dream to the rest of the world as American reality. The American dream, as a dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all citizens, regardless of their social position, thus turned into the ideal means of propaganda.

Right through the second half of the twentieth century, ever more images of America as the land of unlimited possibilities, with superior technology, everyday conveniences, and popular culture accessible to all would come into circulation—of a country where the American dream was a reality for its citizens. Especially from the 1960s on, images of youthfulness, freedom, and high quality of the American way of life were imposed on the world.<sup>11</sup>

The case of Japan provides evidence that America did not export merely the American way of life, but that Americanization had consid-

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<sup>9</sup> Aronovici, “Americanization: Its Meaning and Function,” 695–97.

<sup>10</sup> R. Kroes, “America, Americanization, and Anti-Americanism,” in *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, ed. P.N. Stearns, vol. 1 (New York, 2001), 523.

<sup>11</sup> Maase, “‘Americanization,’ ‘Americanness,’ and ‘Americanisms,’” 3.

erable political significance, and not just in a Europe divided by the Iron Curtain. In occupied Japan in the 1950s, chewing gum showed up, as well as Westerns, Disney, and jazz. The next decade was then witness to even more forceful American penetration, when the American way of life made its way deeply into the lives of average Japanese, whose everyday world was shaped ever more by Coca-Cola, American soap operas, supermarkets, mini-skirts, and hippies.<sup>12</sup> The same elements of Americanized daily life, from chewing gum and Coke to jazz, Disney, TV soaps, and Hollywood productions, were also present in Yugoslavia. And just as they spilled out beyond the confines of culture in Japan, becoming links that bound them politically to America, so in socialist Yugoslavia they represented more than the products of popular culture and consumer society, for they were also part and parcel of America's political influence. As John Tomlinson concluded in his study of cultural imperialism, Americanization spurred on the craving for more consumer goods, and this craving was simultaneously a craving for the political freedoms of liberal democratic states, something that was especially important when considering the role of Americanization in the struggle against communism.<sup>13</sup>

The first comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of Americanization in the Yugoslavia of the 1960s appeared in 1969 in the Party newspaper *Borba*:

On the Champs Elysees one sees "Le Drugstore," on the Red Square you can find youths wearing "blue jeans," on Terazije<sup>14</sup> people eat "popcorn," along Copacabana Avenue they munch on "hot dogs," and everywhere there are computers, Coca-Cola, chewing gum, and jazz in evidence. These are some of the superficial visual signs of the phenomenon that has come to be called "Americanization."<sup>15</sup>

From the mellifluous style of the usually stylistically crude *Borba*, it is clear that Americanization is not being viewed in a negative light,

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<sup>12</sup> Yoshimi, "'America' as Desire and Violence," 433–34.

<sup>13</sup> Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism*, 131.

<sup>14</sup> A famous square in central Belgrade.

<sup>15</sup> Božić, "Impakt 'amerikanizacije,'" *Borba*, October 19, 1969, 3.

and by referring to the Red Square, one of the symbols of communism, it is as if a message is going out to the readers, and with a dollop of justification, that Americanization has even reached the “cradle of communism.” Although the article emphasizes that the majority of today’s world “has no reason to feel sentimental or affectionate toward that country,” there is an acceptance of the fact that across the globe “American items, technology, methods, practical ideas, and rhythm of life are more and more sought after, purchased, used, valued, and copied.”<sup>16</sup> A report in the official herald of the Party is evidence that Yugoslav authorities saw Americanization as a reality, and the reasons for its spread were being sought in the desire for improvement of everyday life, but not in politics or ideology, for “the desire for material well-being knows no borders or prejudices.”<sup>17</sup>

It is because of these various dimensions that Americanization accompanied the growth of America as a global power, and its achievements contributed to the fact that the twentieth century is often called “the American century” and that, by its end, not a single part of the world remained “untouched” by American influences.<sup>18</sup> The idea of “the American twentieth century” causes us, when discussing the process of Americanization, to speak also of American political, economic, and cultural imperialism, by which the U.S., through cultural transfer, established its influence outside its borders.<sup>19</sup>

Cultural imperialism, as a part of American diplomacy that serves to export American values, became an important factor in U.S. foreign policy in the second half of the twentieth century, when the idea gained ground inside the administration that America should “sell” the American way of life to the non-American world. This was, of course, immediately institutionalized by the founding of important propaganda institutions—the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and the Fulbright Program.<sup>20</sup> A significant role in all of this was played by “media imperialism,” by means of which the United States would carry out its plans

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Van Elteren, “Rethinking Americanization Abroad,” 358.

<sup>19</sup> J.C.E. Gienow-Hecht, “Cultural Imperialism,” in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, vol. 1 (New York, 2002), 397–98.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 398.

to spread capitalism through a consumer society propagated by radio, television, the press, and advertising.<sup>21</sup>

What America imposed on the world through its cultural imperialism, or through Americanization, encompassed a broad diapason of “American products”—from automobiles to Hollywood films, and from clothing styles to kitchen appliances, all of which comprised the means of American cultural diplomacy.<sup>22</sup> That is why Americanization is important for an analysis of the transformation of popular culture, mass consumption, and ways of life around the world.

Reinhold Wagnleitner’s views are also important in conceptualizing Americanization as cultural imperialism; he underscored that the concept of American cultural imperialism has been oversimplified when we view it only as describing an amalgamation of military, economic, and political pressure, because indirect means of Americanization have proven much more important.<sup>23</sup> Wagnleitner also emphasized the positive facets of cultural imperialism, describing Austria’s postwar situation and concluding that his own life, in a country where it was necessary to emancipate oneself from the legacy of Nazism, would have been much different without Arthur Miller, Marilyn Monroe, Ray Charles, Miles Davis, rock and roll, and Donald Duck.<sup>24</sup> His perspective on this is extremely important not only in understanding the role that the process of Americanization played in countries such as Germany, Austria, and Japan, that were coming to terms with their past, but also in understanding the role played by the process of Americanization in communist countries, that were faced with their own bleak prospects.

In analyses of Americanization, researches often look at the political background of the transmission of American culture, with an emphasis on the motives for the process; far less often is the object of the analysis the methods by which “recipients” of American culture receive “messages.” Recognizing that cultural imperialism presupposes the passivity of the “recipient” and anticipates global homogeneity as

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<sup>21</sup> Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism*, 34–68, 102–40.

<sup>22</sup> Kroes, “American Empire and Cultural Imperialism,” 3.

<sup>23</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, xii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

its result, many processes involved in Americanization demonstrate that things never work “in one direction,” and therefore it is important to analyze the methods by which “recipients” of American influences adapt them and transform what America has sent them.<sup>25</sup> These aspects of Americanization and transformation of “what is received” are especially important in the analysis of the Yugoslav case, where the Americanization of popular culture generated specific hybrids: the “Partisan Western film” and the “Partisan comic book.”

To the myriad definitions of Americanization, we can add that Americanization is also a phenomenon that with the help of nonpolitical symbols and stereotypes, and by its own insistence on its nonpolitical nature, carries out American political plans and achieves its objectives, something that is of great significance for the understanding of socialist Yugoslavia.

## Popular Culture

Culture is a concept that can be defined in a bewildering variety of ways. While the term was used in the nineteenth century above all to designate visual arts, literature, philosophy, natural science, and music, people grew more and more aware of the methods by which art and science were formed by the social milieu. Thus the term culture has extended its meaning in the same way historians, sociologists, literary critics, and others have expanded their knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

The various meanings of the concept of culture depend on the philosophical, scientific, social, or historical context in which culture is being discussed, and also from its social role in the given historical moment. In this regard, the important definitions are the ones in which culture is characterized as “way of life”<sup>27</sup> and “cultivation of mind.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kuisel, “Commentary: Americanization for Historians,” 509. See also E. Said, *Kultura i imperijalizam*.

<sup>26</sup> Berk, *Istorija i društvena teorija*, 123.

<sup>27</sup> R. Vilić, “Analiza kulture,” in *Studije kulture*, ed. J. Đorđević (Belgrade, 2002), 124.

<sup>28</sup> Mueller, ed., *German Popular Culture—How American Is It?*, 1.



In the context of Americanization, culture was also important as a means of social and political change.<sup>29</sup>

Another thing that is important in Yugoslavia for the study of the process of Americanization of popular culture is the idea that popular culture also has political potential. It is this very potential that made it important in Cold War conditions. On the one hand, popular culture as a means of Americanization destroyed the stable system of European culture that had been dominant for centuries; on the other hand, in the context of the Cold War, it also destroyed the system of dogmatic views about culture that were characteristic of the Eastern Bloc. Therefore it became a weapon of cultural propaganda by means of which a special kind of Cold War was fought. In this “cultural Cold War,” cultural diplomacy was a supplement to psychological warfare, exporting American culture and the American way of life through organs of the U.S. government, including the USIA. Programs of cultural exchange, international fairs and exhibitions, the distribution of Hollywood films and “light” culture—these emerged as just some of the activities connected to the promotion of American values through easily accessible popular culture. Big corporations quickly joined in this war (Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, Levi’s), and they contributed to the popularization of the symbols of Americanization, all with the aim of seeing “cultural imperialism” homogenize the world into a “global village” that would be dominated by American values.<sup>30</sup>

According to multiple definitions of popular culture and its significance in the processes of Americanization, Cold War propaganda, and the formation of identity, under the rubric of popular culture fall film, music, television, popular literature, pop art, blue jeans, fashion, Coca-Cola, various aspects of daily life, recreation, and, for some people, even the driving of automobiles.<sup>31</sup> In the processes of Americaniza-

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<sup>29</sup> F. Trommler, “Mixing High and Popular Culture: The Impact of the Communication Revolution,” in Mueller, *German Popular Culture*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> D. Welch, “Cultural Propaganda,” in *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: a Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, 2003), 101.

<sup>31</sup> See Fisk, *Popularna kultura*; Moren, *Duh vremena*, vol. 1; Đorđević, ed., *Studije kulture*, 317–420; Hauser, *Sociologija umetnosti*, vol. 2, 115–70; P. Bahl, “Popularna kultura,” in *Moderna američka kultura*, ed. K. Bigsbi (Podgorica, 2009), 441–62.

tion and in the wake of Cold War propaganda, and also in the wake of the Yugoslav orientation in foreign policy, these facets of American popular culture also became parts of Yugoslav popular culture.

Despite the nationalisms that began to spring up in Yugoslavia in the 1960s, popular culture did not recognize republican borders, nor did it have national affiliations, and therefore it is considered in an all-Yugoslav context in this book. Films about Tarzan made it to wherever there was a movie theater, magazines and dime novels were purchased at kiosks all around the country, and self-serve stores popped up from the village of Ivanec by Zagreb to Barajevo near Belgrade.

If one considers that American popular culture was “everywhere” in Yugoslavia, and that the acceptance of a particular culture can be a means for constructing a collective identity,<sup>32</sup> then the big question becomes what type of collective identity was constructed by the reception of Western popular culture when it was accompanied by communist (socialist) ideology. That is to say, one must ask what these Yugoslav “children of Marx and Coca-Cola”<sup>33</sup> are like, and what kind of country is it that is “half Karl Marx and half Groucho.”<sup>34</sup>

To examine America’s “cultural Cold War” and Yugoslav reality in the 1960s, we must ask what kind of results the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture brought. The extent to which Yugoslav society was Americanized is difficult to measure; this has been demonstrated by studies done on the Americanization of Germany. In the book *German Popular Culture*, the assertion is made that this is a question for which no answer can be found.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, examined in the context of the Cold War and a bipolar world, even without the “quantification” of Americanization, it can be said that popular culture, in addition to enriching the quality of life of people in their daily routines, had a significant impact on social change in general. This social change did not make Yugoslavia free or democratic, but rather were part of a long process whereby the entirety of Yugoslav society gradually evolved.

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<sup>32</sup> Berk, *Istorija i društvena teorija*, 128.

<sup>33</sup> de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 343.

<sup>34</sup> “Yugoslavia: Half Karl & Half Groucho,” *Time*, May 7, 1965.

<sup>35</sup> Mueller, *German Popular Culture*, 1.

## The 1960s

When one thinks of the 1960s, a whole set of images comes to mind; they cover a very broad spectrum of phenomena, occurrences and personalities in what was one of the most interesting periods of the twentieth century. The very mention of the 1960s calls for emotions from people who experienced the decade—and from people who were not even born yet; from people for whom it was a golden age and from those who view it as an era when the sun began to set on morality, authority, and discipline.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1960s the icons line up and pass by as if they were on an endless strip of film: John and Jackie Kennedy, Che Guevara, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley. Global sensations like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones; heroes such as Yuri Gagarin and Neil Armstrong; film directors like Jean Luc Godard, Akira Kurosawa, Federico Fellini, Stanley Kubrick, and François Truffaut; new philosophers, anthropologists, and sociologists such as Marshall McLuhan, Roland Barthes, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault; bizarre men of the hour like Caryl Chessman and Charles Manson.

In various ways the 1960s were a decade of various kinds of “domination.” They were dominated by Cold War political crises (the U2 incident, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the building of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the fall of Khrushchev, the detonation of China’s first atomic bomb, the Vietnam War, the Six-Day War, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba, John and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, and Che Guevara); new movements (the New Left, the Civil Rights, anti-war, student, feminist, gay rights, Black Power, ecological); popular culture and youth culture (rock and roll, the hippie movement, pop art, comic books, young people’s literature, Woodstock, the sexual revolution, experimentation with drugs, Zen Buddhism, the Beatles); technological accomplishments (the first man in space, the first woman in space, the first men on the Moon, the first heart transplant, the first computer game, the first contraceptive pills,

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<sup>36</sup> Marwick, *The Sixties*, 3.

the first color television show, the first satellite network).<sup>37</sup> All of these “dominations,” whose equivalents from various periods for the most part do not fall under any common rubric like those of the 1960s, had global ripple effects.

Although the 1960s were a global phenomenon, its manifestations across the world were local phenomena and correspondingly diverse. One of the examples of the global 1960s phenomena was the 1968 revolt, which was a unique myth, symbol, and political and cultural episode. These transnational revolts had, however, local characteristics—American students fought for civil equality and against the war in Vietnam, French students fought against the de Gaulle regime, German students questioned the past of their fathers and their role in Nazi Germany, Spanish students fought against the Franco dictatorship. Campuses were rocked in Milan, Turin, Berlin, Berkeley, at the Sorbonne, in Mexico City by similar mechanisms and types of demonstrations, but, in general, for different reasons and with differing messages.<sup>38</sup> The 1968 global revolt reached Yugoslavia as well, in the student centers of Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo. In the wave of general rebellion, Belgrade got the Red University “Karl Marx” from its demonstrations, and the chief demands were aimed at “the abolition of all privileges, the democratization of the media information, as well as the right to gather and demonstrate.”<sup>39</sup> The 1968 protests in Yugoslavia were, in many ways, betrayed; it ended with Tito’s sentence “The students are right,” and a portion of the rebels started to move into various institutions and became part of the system, something that confirms the 1960s view that they “started with illusory hopes and finished with a great deal of pessimism.”<sup>40</sup>

In addition to episodes of rebellion and protest, the zenith of world art, culture, and philosophy also made its way into Yugoslavia during the 1960s, as part of a global process, but also as part of Yugoslavia’s foreign policy orientation. This was the decade of American exhibitions of abstract expressionism and pop art, as well as exhibitions

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 17–20.

<sup>38</sup> V. Laker, *Istorije Evrope 1945–1992* (Belgrade, 1999), 423–33.

<sup>39</sup> Kanclajter and Stojaković, “‘1968’ u Jugoslaviji—studentski protesti između Istoka i Zapada,” 453–454.

<sup>40</sup> Dimić, “Beograd šezdesetih, između istorijskog i svakodnevnog,” 46.

of Picasso and Van Gogh; guest appearances by artists from the West (Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Richard Burton, Claude Lelouch, Vittorio De Sica); visits by philosophers (such as Marcuse and Sartre), stars of popular music (Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Charles Aznavour, Rita Pavone, Domenico Modugno) as well as of classical music, opera, and ballet (the opera company La Fenice, Arthur Rubinstein, the Bolshoi Theater, Igor Stravinsky). International cinematic hits of the 1960s were also hits in Yugoslav movie houses. Girls tried to groom their looks to evoke Holly Golightly from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, or Jean Seberg from *Breathless*. The most popular television series of the time (*Peyton Place*, *Bonanza*, *Dr. Kildare*, *The Saint*) were broadcast on the channels of Yugoslav Radio Television. People wore jeans and windbreakers but also op-art and hippie styles. On the streets, the Fića<sup>41</sup> dominated, but there were also Japanese Toyotas and Ford Mustangs from America.<sup>42</sup> The Soviet cosmonauts German Titov and Andriyan Nikolayev were welcomed to the country, as were the American astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin, and Michael Collins—and just only a hundred days after their walk on the moon.<sup>43</sup> By the acceptance of all these trends in the 1960s, Yugoslavia showed that it was, in the spheres of art, popular culture, and daily life, more and more—if still not completely—a part of the Western referential system, and also a part of global phenomena and movements.

The idyll of the 1960s was epitomized by the presence of foreign stars in Yugoslavia, the cinematic coproductions that they filmed there, the exhibitions of abstract expressionism and pop art, international theater and film festivals, the freedom to travel, the Nobel Prize awarded to Ivo Andrić, the Oscar won by Dušan Vukotić, new supermarkets on the American model, international journals for sale at kiosks around the country, Disney on the small screen. But this idyll was not the only reality for Yugoslavia.

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<sup>41</sup> Popular Yugoslav car Fiat 750Z.

<sup>42</sup> “Primeru radi, na Sajmu automobila 1967, za šest dana, 26 Jugoslovena je kupilo *ford mustang*” [For example, on the Automobile Fair in 1967, in six days 26 Yugoslavs bought the Ford Mustang], *Ilustrovana politika*, May 9, 1967, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Vučetić, “Soviet Cosmonauts and American Astronauts in Yugoslavia,” 188–205.

In a political sense, the 1960s in Yugoslavia abounded in contradictions and crises. The political crisis grew over the course of the entire decade, opening more and more questions about the relationship between the constituent nations, and even about the survival of the state. As early as March 1962 Josip Broz Tito asked, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), “Is our country fit to survive, or will it fall apart?” Despite the promulgation in 1963 of a more liberal constitution, the following year, at the Eighth Congress of the LCY, nationalist themes became even more prominent. Soon came the sidelining of the chief of police, Aleksandar Ranković, after which there was more room for discussion of the political position of Serbia’s two autonomous provinces. The Yugoslav state went through constitutional and legal restructuring, during which, by dint of the amendments of 1967, 1968, and 1969, the independence of the federation was limited by being placed under the supervision of the republics and regions.<sup>44</sup> The uprising among Albanians in Kosovo took place in 1968, and bomb blasts and terrorist actions of Ustashi from the diaspora unsettled the appearance of a peaceful socialist society.<sup>45</sup> Amid all the manifold events that made the 1960s in Yugoslavia an uncertain time, this was also the decade in which economic reforms were passed in 1965, enabling the very significant industrial growth and cautious steps toward some forms of a market economy.

The beginnings of the reexamination of the country’s internal system, as well as resistance to entrenched dogmas, were also stormy. Milovan Đilas was arrested and sentenced;<sup>46</sup> Mihajlo Mihajlov was also deprived of liberty and sentenced, in the face of much publicity around the world;<sup>47</sup> and there were debates about the journal *Praxis*,

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<sup>44</sup> Dimić, “Beograd sezdesetih,” 56.

<sup>45</sup> *Moderna srpska država 1804–2004: Hronologija* (Belgrade, 2004), 334–43.

<sup>46</sup> Milovan Đilas (1911–1995) was a political writer, and a former high ranking communist politician. He was arrested in 1956, released from prison in 1961, and later arrested again, in 1962; he spent a total of nine years in prison.

<sup>47</sup> Mihajlo Mihajlov (1934–2010) was a prominent Yugoslav dissident, who was imprisoned for seven years during the 1960s and 1970s. As a university professor of Russian literature he was in 1966 sentenced to three and a half years’ imprisonment for “damaging the reputation of a foreign state” after publishing an essay on camps for dissidents in the Soviet Union.

while language questions, initiated by the Zagreb “Declaration on the Croatian Language” and the Serbian counter-document “A Suggestion for Consideration,” grew into political issues of the first order.

The burden of a great number of thorny domestic political questions, on the one hand, and the acceptance of so many items from American popular culture and other Western influences, on the other hand, manifested themselves in the unique schizophrenia of Yugoslav society. In any case, Yugoslavia, with its virtues and its shortcomings, became a part of the global phenomenon of “crazy,” “unrepeatable,” “contradictory,” “restless,” “revolutionary” 1960s, in both a political and a culturological sense.

## Yugoslav-American Relations

It is not possible to examine the process of Americanization in Yugoslavia without looking at the history of Yugoslav-American relations. The 1960s belong to the most dynamic and important years of connections between Belgrade and Washington, but much of what those years was to bring had actually been started much earlier, even as far back as 1867, when the first official contacts between the United States and Serbia took place, along with the first agreements on consular relations, which were officially established in 1882.<sup>48</sup> With the signing of bilateral conventions the foundations were laid for later Yugoslav-American relations, which were to have a great deal to do with the fate of Yugoslavia throughout the whole of the twentieth century.

With the start of World War I, closer contacts emerged between the two countries. Serbia and the United States were allies, and the American government, beginning in November 1917, regularly dispatched aid to Serbia in the sum of one million dollars a month.<sup>49</sup> Good relations, deepened by the wartime alliance, were considerably strengthened by the fact that the United States was among the first countries to rec-

<sup>48</sup> Petković, *Jedan vek odnosa Jugoslavije i SAD*, 12.

<sup>49</sup> The value of U.S.\$1 million 1917 U.S. dollars equals U.S.\$17 million in 2011 if one uses the Consumer Price Index, and to 11.7 million if one uses the GDP deflator. See <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/resultwithad.php>.



ognize the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1919.<sup>50</sup> During World War II, America was once more Yugoslavia's ally. On April 8, 1941, the United States condemned Germany's aggression against Yugoslavia, and three days later it approved the collection of assistance for Yugoslavia.<sup>51</sup> Washington's ideological differences with the Partisan movement were a drag on the wartime alliance, as were the close relations of the United States with the royal government in London and with the movement of Draža Mihailović. At the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, however, Washington's relations with the Mihailović movement began to cool, and the ever more open acceptance of Tito's Partisan movement came into view. This development culminated in the Teheran Conference of 1943, where Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Josef Stalin agreed to offer all possible equipment and food support to the Yugoslav Partisans, who were now officially recognized as the National Liberation Movement.<sup>52</sup>

As the war approached its conclusion, American deliveries of aid to the Partisans increased, and together with those from Britain represented about 95 percent of the total deliveries that the Partisans received from foreign sources.<sup>53</sup> The next phase in this alliance and in the recognition of the new government was Roosevelt's offer to include Yugoslavia in the relief program of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in May of 1944. The U.S. government then recognized the government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) on December 22, 1945, with ambassadors from the two countries, one of them a leading capitalist power and the other a newly created communist one, being exchanged on April 19, 1946.<sup>54</sup>

The period immediately following the end of World War II was marked by the euphoria of victory, but it was quickly overshadowed by

<sup>50</sup> The first recognition came from Norway on January 26, 1919, and then, in February, came those from the United States and Greece. See *Moderna srpska država 1804–2004*, 193.

<sup>51</sup> Arhiv Jugoslavije (henceforth, AJ), Kabinet Predsednika Republike (henceforth, KPR), 1-3-a, SAD, Kratak istorijski pregled jugoslovensko-američkih odnosa od 1881–1970 godine, September 26, 1970.

<sup>52</sup> Petković, *Jedan vek odnosa Jugoslavije i SAD*, 52–54, 58.

<sup>53</sup> Lj. Adamović, Dž. Lemp, and R. Priket, *Američko-jugoslovenski ekonomski odnosi posle Drugog svetskog rata* (Belgrade, 1990), 24.

<sup>54</sup> AJ, KPR, 1-3-a, Sekretarijat Predsednika Republike.



the start of the Cold War and the suspiciousness of the former allies because of insuperable ideological differences. The appearance of the Iron Curtain inexorably made “official” the position of Yugoslavia within the Soviet sphere of influence and made an ideological enemy of its wartime ally, America. Following Tito’s victory in the elections of November 1945, the U.S. ambassador in Belgrade, Richard Patterson, informed Washington that Belgrade looked “like the capital city of a Soviet republic, and the regime is hostile toward America and Britain.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, in these years when the Cold War was “heating up,” Yugoslavia was viewed in the West as one of the most loyal Soviet satellites, and Yugoslav-American relations were at their lowest point ever.

The start of the Cold War was marked by the Marshall Plan, and Yugoslavia’s rejection of this assistance in 1947 was another in the series of events that shaped Yugoslav-American relations on the eve of Yugoslavia’s conflict with the Soviet Union. From that it is no wonder that the American ambassador to Yugoslavia, Cavendish Cannon, viewed Yugoslavia as “the most loyal and dedicated collaborator and cutting edge of dynamic and expansionistic communism.”<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, in July 1947 there were already possible cracks emerging in the monolithic system on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The charge d’affaires of the American embassy, John Cabot, observed that “Yugoslav communism is even now showing signs of retreat from Russian communism, despite its position as favorite and the fundamental similarities of race and political tradition.”<sup>57</sup>

Regardless of views such as those, there was no confusion in seeing what positions Yugoslavia strongly stood for. Until the conflict with Stalin, the West perceived Tito as the “most dogmatic and militant Stalinist in all of Europe.”<sup>58</sup> Thus 1948 was a fateful year and a turning point not only in Yugoslav-American relations, but also in the history of Yugoslavia in the second half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>55</sup> Bekić, *Југославија у hladnom ratu*, 24.

<sup>56</sup> “Cannon to Marshal,” September 7, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, Washington, D.C., 1976.

<sup>57</sup> AJ, Kabinet maršala Југославије (henceforth, KMJ), I-3-b/759, Inostrana služba USA, br. 1063, Predmet: Razmatranja o politici prema Југославији, Američka ambasada, Belgrade, July 7, 1947.

<sup>58</sup> Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 155.

The dramatic rupture with the USSR in 1948 completely altered the foreign policy stance of Yugoslavia, but the period of the conflict with the Soviet Union, up until the new “reconciliation” with it, was accompanied by pronounced oscillations, whether one is considering Yugoslav-American or Yugoslav-Soviet relations. During the first years of the Cold War, especially in the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin conflict, Yugoslavia emerged as the central point in America’s efforts to cause a split in the communist world. According to Lorraine Lees, the “wedge” strategy<sup>59</sup> was the one most deployed toward Yugoslavia, a country that was to be shown that an exit from the Soviet camp was possible. By supporting Tito’s “no” to Stalin, Washington saw also the possibility of showing the other Soviet satellites how to follow Yugoslavia’s path, and giving them impetus to do so.<sup>60</sup> It was in those early years of the Cold War, then, that the United States began offering assistance and support to Yugoslavia, first economic (after 1949) and then military.<sup>61</sup>

Stalin’s death created the possibility of the improvement of Yugoslav-Soviet relations, and it also had an effect on Yugoslav-American relations. Khrushchev’s visit to Belgrade in 1955 once again rocked American confidence in Yugoslavia’s irreversible break with the Eastern Bloc, but later the optimism of Washington that Yugoslavia would not return to the Soviet camp would continue to dominate.<sup>62</sup> The first visit of the U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to Belgrade in 1955 attests to the significance that Yugoslavia had in undermining the communist world, and the visit confirmed that Yugoslavia would not be returning to Moscow’s side.<sup>63</sup> Given these views, the American policy toward Yugoslavia was clear. Its short-term goals were to keep Yugoslavia outside the Soviet bloc and to use Belgrade’s influence on the other satellites to break with the Eastern Bloc, and its

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<sup>59</sup> A combination of American pressure and support aimed at the creation of divisions between the Soviet Union and other communist countries.

<sup>60</sup> Lis, *Održavanje Tita na površini: Sjedinjene Države, Jugoslavija, i Hladni rat*, 11.

<sup>61</sup> The Military Assistance Pact between the governments of the FPRY and the United States was concluded on November 14, 1951. By signing this agreement, Yugoslavia was included in the Mutual Defense Aid Program (MDAP).

<sup>62</sup> NIE, 31-2-55, Yugoslavia’s Internal Position, September 7, 1955.

<sup>63</sup> Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik*, 510.

long-term goals were the eventual recognition of the right of the Yugoslav people to live under a government that they had selected themselves, that would maintain peaceful relations with neighboring countries, and that would remain a part of the community of free nations.<sup>64</sup>

An overall assessment of the first fifteen years of socialism (1945–60) demonstrates that Yugoslav reality was characterized by the search for a third path, and that this was a unique quest for identity, accompanied by the rise and fall of ties with Moscow and Washington. The break with the USSR carried off a daring and heretofore inconceivable project within the communist camp. This break left deep traces on all facets of Yugoslav reality, as well as daily life. To put it in colorful terms, the “no” to Stalin was a “yes” to many realities of the Western world, from the freedom to travel to rock and roll, usually inaccessible to people behind the Iron Curtain.

Relations with the USSR were fickle, and sometimes they were only a step away from a new “fraternal embrace,” or from new tanks at the Yugoslav borders. But Tito was successful in striking a balance between aid from the West and ideology from the East. He seemed ready at all times to say “no” to either one side or the other, and never ever uttering “yes.” In the search for political identity in a polarized world, the pragmatic Tito ultimately found a solution in the idea of nonalignment, which made Yugoslavia’s position between the superpowers easier and which allowed the country to be not so much perched between East and West as in the East and in the West.

The 1960s kicked off with an important meeting at the highest level: at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 1960, Josip Broz Tito and Dwight Eisenhower held a meeting. This was the first direct contact between the leaders of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the United States. Their meeting set off a chain of mutual visits, of Yugoslav officials to Washington and American officials to Belgrade. The most significant of these was the meeting between Tito and John F. Kennedy, in October 1963. The first conference of nonaligned states, held in Belgrade in September 1961, caused conflict and a cooling of relations. On the eve of

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<sup>64</sup> DNSA, NSC 5526, United States Policy toward Yugoslavia, November 21, 1955.

the conference, the American side revealed certain worries about the outcome of the gathering, but Belgrade convinced Washington that it would remain neutral.<sup>65</sup> Tito's opening speech at the conference, however, in which he supported the Soviets and failed to condemn their atomic test that was conducted that very day, and in which he harshly criticized the American positions on Berlin and the base at Guantanamo in Cuba, led unavoidably to a new phase.

The consequences of this turn of events were immediate. Ambassador George Kennan reported to the State Department that Tito's pronouncements on Berlin and the continuation of Soviet nuclear tests were a "deep disappointment," and that it was as if Khrushchev had written the part of Tito's speech that dealt with Berlin.<sup>66</sup> Not being eager to forgive Belgrade's "slap in the face" that it had received at the nonaligned summit, at the beginning of October 1962, Congress used an amendment to deprive Yugoslavia of its most-favored nation status, a privilege that had been in use since 1881.<sup>67</sup> Thus we see that the start of the 1960s was marked by a cooling of Yugoslav-American relations and their decline to the lowest level since 1948. The period of cooled relations was ended by the visit of Tito to Kennedy on October 17, 1963<sup>68</sup> and by the decision of Congress to return Yugoslavia's most-favored nation status immediately afterwards. This visit by Josip Broz Tito not only returned American-Yugoslav relations to normal but also had a long-term effect, since this relationship, in which Belgrade would remain a devoted communist ally of Washington, and Washington would remain the patron of Tito's

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<sup>65</sup> FRUS, 1961–63, vol. 16, Eastern Europe, 93, Memorandum of Conversation, Brioni, July 1961: Telegram from the Embassy in Yugoslavia to the Department of State, Belgrade, after August 31, 1961, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/kennedtyjf/wvi/63673.htm>, 95.

<sup>66</sup> FRUS, 1961–1963, vol. 16, Eastern Europe, 96, Telegram from the Embassy in Yugoslavia to the Department of State, Belgrade, September 3, 1961, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/kennedtyjf/wvi/63673.htm>, 96.

<sup>67</sup> For more information regarding the abrogation of most favored nation status, see Bogetić, "Uvođenje američkih ekonomskih restrikcija Jugoslaviji tokom 1962."

<sup>68</sup> For more information about this visit, see Bogetić, "Prva Titova poseta Vašingtonu—poslednji Kenedijev međunarodni angažman (17 October 1963)."

specific path to socialism, was not to undergo fundamental change until the collapse of Yugoslavia.

The remaining problems in Yugoslav-American affairs in the 1960s were the result of major Cold War crises. In the second half of the 1960s, the most serious stumbling block in Yugoslav-American relations was the war in Vietnam. Immediately after the bombardment of North Vietnam, in February 1965, there was sharp Yugoslav condemnation of American policy. In this case also, however, as in the majority of similar instances in the Belgrade-Washington relationship, American dollars were pitted against Yugoslav ideology. American officials, criticizing the harshly negative positions of Yugoslav officials toward American policy in Vietnam, underscored the fact that such Yugoslav stances would unavoidably have an impact on the economic sphere. It became apparent that a simple lexicon, in which “economy” and “dollars” were mentioned, was the most effective way of changing, or at least softening, Yugoslav policy: Yugoslav officials would, at any hint that the screws were about to be tightened on American financial support, tone down their terminology.<sup>69</sup>

Events in the Middle East also weighed down Yugoslav-American relations. In the conflicts in the Middle East, Yugoslavia gave its complete support to the policies of the Arab states, and by its public condemnation of the Israeli side, Yugoslavia was directly confronting the United States.<sup>70</sup> Interposing itself as one of the leaders of the non-aligned states, and as an important intermediary between East and West, Belgrade once more, relatively easily, surmounted its foreign policy problems, and in such a way that, instead of “punishment” from Washington, a request from Johnson was forthcoming, asking Tito for his diplomatic mediation.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, 178. Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), Washington, July 22, 1965. [http://state.gov/www/about\\_state/history/vol\\_xvii/v.html](http://state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xvii/v.html) (January 13, 2009)

<sup>70</sup> For more information, see Bogetić, “Arapsko-izraelski rat 1967. godine i jugoslovensko-američki odnosi,” 102–103.

<sup>71</sup> AJ, 507/IX, 109-V-47. Poruka predsednika SAD Džonsona predsedniku Titu, 24 August 1967.

There was one other major Cold War crisis that influenced Yugoslav-American relations: the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. But in this crisis, Yugoslavia actually, for the first time, was in complete support of the Western position. Such a radical Soviet move led Yugoslavia's to look once more in the direction of the White House with greater enthusiasm than in the direction of the Kremlin, because foreign investments and credits in dollars, of course, imparted a greater sense of security from the rattling of Soviet weapons along the borders.

As was the case with all previous conflicts with Moscow, the one in 1968 perhaps distanced Yugoslavia more from the USSR and brought it closer to America than any other conflict since 1948; this would seem to be on the principle that the worsening of relations with one party leads to the improvement of relations with the other. At the end of this stormy Cold War decade, in 1970, Tito met with President Richard Nixon, and a more liberal visa arrangement was concluded between the SFRY and the United States, and this enabled the acquisition of multiple-entry visas valid for one year.<sup>72</sup> All the momentous events in Yugoslav-American relations in the 1960s demonstrate the skill and balancing mechanisms employed by the Yugoslav side. Even the Americans took note of the fact that Belgrade made skillful use of the East-West conflict to strengthen its independence, thereby winning international influence that was in drastic disproportion to the country's size and strategic importance.<sup>73</sup> An independent Yugoslavia, to the extent that independence was possible amidst the Cold War division of the world, was more suited to America rather than a Yugoslavia totally oriented toward the West, because as an independent state it served as an example to the other satellite states that "desertion" was possible.

In summing up the appraisals of Yugoslav-American relations, one could say that they ranged from love to hate and that sometimes they were extremely calculated, while at other times they were characterized by over-emotional reactions. The unique Cold War passions that boiled over in this relationship might have been best described

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<sup>72</sup> AJ, KPR, 1-3-a, SAD, Sekretarijat Predsednika Republike: Kratak istorijski pregled jugoslovensko-američkih odnosa od 1881-1970. godine, 26. septembar 1970.

<sup>73</sup> NIE, 15-61, Outlook for Yugoslavia, May 23, 1961.

by George Kennan: “we were behaving like a man and a woman who felt an incredible sexual attraction but who were both constrained by marital bonds. Thus in public they always cursed and insulted each other, although when they were by themselves, they made beautiful music together.”<sup>74</sup>

From the American point of view, Yugoslav-American relations were strikingly characterized in a sentence from a 1966 report: “Since 1950, we have invested \$3.5 billion in Tito’s Yugoslavia. It has paid off.”<sup>75</sup> The cold, straightforward sentence “It has paid off” could be seamlessly applied from the Yugoslav side as well. Yugoslavia found its *modus vivendi* as part of the triangle involving Moscow-Belgrade-Washington, and this suited everyone—the communist Tito was an unreliable ally, prone to independent action and unpleasant surprises, the Soviets were temporarily satisfied with their reconciliation with Tito because of their disciplining of the Soviet bloc, and Tito, doing a skillful balancing act, secured the independence he had long sought.<sup>76</sup>

A metaphorical detail in the relations between Yugoslavia and America that, in some way, confirms that these relations were important also for the overall flow international political events, was, without doubt, the Berlin Wall. When this wall was erected, Belgrade and Washington found themselves on strongly opposing sides of the issue, but when it was torn down, each of them participated in its destruction in its own way—America within the framework of its global anti-communist strategy, and Yugoslavia as the Trojan Horse that ate away at communism from the inside by establishing the precedent that a refusal of obedience to Moscow was possible.

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<sup>74</sup> DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1961, F-120, 43719, Zabeleška o razgovoru Janeza Stanovnika sa Kenanom na večeri u indijskoj ambasadi, January 31, 1962.

<sup>75</sup> FRUS, 1964–1968, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, 180, Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State (Katzenbach) and the Under Secretary of Agriculture (Schnittker) to President Johnson, Washington, November 30, 1966, [http://state.gov/www/about\\_state/history/vol\\_xvii/v.html](http://state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xvii/v.html).

<sup>76</sup> Kuljić, *Tito: Sociološko-istorijska studija*, 339.





## CHAPTER 1

# Between Pink Hollywood and the Black Wave

Viewed outside the United States, every American  
film resembles refined political propaganda.

— MARSHALL MCLUHAN (1971)

From the first projection of the Lumière brothers' creations in 1895, the persuasiveness and power of film were obvious, and today it does not surprise us to hear that the people who were present at that showing were so impressed with the film's visual verisimilitude that they took fright and leapt out of their seats when a train, tiny at first, gained size as it filled up the screen and created the impression that it was going to barge off the screen into the salon of the Gran Café.<sup>1</sup>

Following the discovery of this new art form, film soon transferred its magic to the street and into the homes of all levels of society. As Hugo von Hofmannsthal had observed by 1921, the masses, whose minds were empty because of the way of life that had been imposed on them, began to flock to the cinemas, finding there all the things of which they had been deprived.<sup>2</sup> Film was, therefore, from its beginning a replacement for dreams and a kind of materialization of a virtual world, in which people were offered life of a kind that they were lacking.

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<sup>1</sup> V. Pogačić, *Nemi svedoci* (Belgrade, 1990), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Krakauer, "Filmski gledalac," *Gledišta* 10, nos. 6–7 (June–July 1969): 895.

This point about “an offer of life of the kind that was lacking” was an excellent point of departure not only for the American administration in the Cold War, which sent to people behind the Iron Curtain the Hollywood image of a wealthy and luxurious America and American society, but also for the Yugoslav government, which, as it turned out, knew perfectly well how to manipulate American film. From that point on film is indispensable in examining American influences on Yugoslav society, for, owing to its absolute domination in the cinemas, people in the Yugoslav socialist system, seeing the luxury, but also the freer and less conventional lifestyles, formed their views and positions, and also their hopes, on the model of the American way of life.

Film drew its power from the fact that it was a medium aimed at a public of millions. On account of this, it had the power to change society—to change the individual, institutions, and the cinematic creators. Recognizing that twentieth-century men and women were completely open to film as a part of their daily lives and as a favorite pastime, the American administration added cinematography to its arsenal of propaganda weapons and, by means of Hollywood products systematically gave off a certain image of America, which viewers around the world absorbed day after day, dreaming about the American dream in non-American conditions.

Many historians maintain that consumer society, or the dream of a full shopping basket in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, contributed significantly to the fall of communism. It is almost as if the director of the international section of the American Motion Picture Association recognized this in 1947, right at the outset of the Cold War, when he said that there was no more efficient salesman of American products in foreign lands than American film.<sup>3</sup> In fact, scenes from films showing houses with swimming pools, full refrigerators, dishwashers, large automobiles, jam-packed closets and luxurious stores, contributed to a noteworthy degree to the enduring infatuation of the audience, especially in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, with everything that the Americans themselves characterized as the American dream, thereby paving the way for the fall of communism. By watching such films, the audience all over the world dreamed the

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<sup>3</sup> Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War*, 33.

American dream, personified by Hollywood, and they wanted this dream for themselves.

An entire system was set up to work on America's film propaganda. It was most often under the control of the State Department, because its goal was clear—it was supposed to change the way of thinking of the public and push it to adopt the idea of the American dream and the advantages of life in the United States. By operating on the viewers' hearts and souls, a way had been found to change the *weltanschauung* of entire generations that were being formed around American film, from the most obvious, external traits (fashion, hair-styles, imitating stars) to those internal and essential ones by which the codes of Western culture are accepted and the fundamental values of American society are adopted.

It is important to note that Yugoslav authorities viewed film as “the most popular mass art of all,” and that “by dint of this alone it had the weightiest responsibility” and it was the “means for the spreading of culture, the development of suitable world views, and the cultivation of good taste and love for true values in life”; the authorities simply added the remark that film “had to respect the basic principles of our society.”<sup>4</sup> But it remains to be asked why American film was so welcome in a socialist society. Pragmatic interests carried risks that were too great, and it is possible that the Yugoslav authorities either wrongly estimated the effects of American movies or self-confidently believed that they could control, or eventually eliminate, their ill effects.

## American Film in Yugoslavia

The popularity of American film and the domination of Hollywood productions in Yugoslav cinemas were evident even at the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In the interwar years, citizens could admire American stars, Hollywood movies dominated cinemas, and a large number of movie magazines were being published, among them one titled *Hollywood*. Even the end of World War II and the liberation of Belgrade were celebrated with an American film complete with the

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<sup>4</sup> AJ, 405, S-1, Kratak pregled razvoja i organizacija domaće kinematografije.

sounds of jazz, *Sun Valley Serenade*. By the end of 1944, however, the Sovietization that was developing in all spheres of life had interrupted the openness to American film. Now the new hero became Chapayev,<sup>5</sup> and when the film about him was shown in Belgrade in 1945, the audience gave “stormy ovations to the magnificent victory of the Slavic peoples over the German aggressors, and to the leaders of our peoples, Comrade Stalin and Comrade Tito.”<sup>6</sup>

After the liberation of Belgrade, the new government sped up the preparation of new movie theaters, considering film the best and fastest form of mass propaganda, and by November 1944 the cinematic repertory had started to firm up; it was dominated by the Soviet movies *Stalingrad*, *Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya*, *She Defends Her Country*, among others. Although it was apparent that a rapid Sovietization was underway, the numbers show that American cinema did not lose its popularity easily or quickly. In terms of percentages, American films comprised 30.89 percent of the Belgrade repertory in November and December, while in the same period Soviet movies comprised 51.67 percent.<sup>7</sup> The following year 217 films were imported, of which 93 were Soviet and 70 American. In 1946 the situation changed drastically, when, out of 169 imported movies, 102 were Soviet and only 9 American.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, despite the propaganda in favor of Soviet movies, in Belgrade in those years the actual repertory of films shown was 39.79 percent Soviet, while American movies were in the lead with 40.73 percent.<sup>9</sup> Nineteen forty-seven was marked by absolute predominance of Soviet film over American, in terms of import policy. (Of 159 films, 96 were Soviet and 11 were American.) This import balance led to the first drastic drop in the representation of American film in the repertories of Belgrade movie theaters—Soviet movies accounted for

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<sup>5</sup> The hero of an eponymous Soviet film about the legendary commander of the Red Army.

<sup>6</sup> Pejović, *Odnosi društva za kulturnu saradnju Jugoslavija-SSSR i Svesaveznog društva za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom*, M.A. thesis, Belgrade, 2010, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Dević, “Strani film u beogradskim bioskopima od novembra 1944. do kraja 1955. godine,” 14–16.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

62.28 percent of the repertory in 1947, while American movies, dominant a year earlier, fell to a mere 3.14 percent.<sup>10</sup>

Import policy was accompanied by a type of rhetoric that disqualified American film. In the momentous year 1948, Radovan Zogović, speaking at the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, attacked “decadent and reactionary American film” in the customarily uncompromising language directed at everything that came from the West:

The horrific, destructive opiate of Hollywood has as its primary task the shifting of attention and the consciousness of people away from social problems and onto psycho-pathological issues. This is the poisoning of people’s minds by suffocating or mesmerizing them with scenes of death, murder, nightmares, illusions, pornography, and domestic idylls; to cultivate in them animalistic dispositions, atavistic instincts, admiration for crime and criminals, and keenness for gangster-like experiences. And because we are against reactionary and decadent American film, we must use the harshest means to criticize and dethrone it.<sup>11</sup>

“Criticism and dethronement,” however, began to come to a halt, owing to massive changes in foreign policy, but the adjective “decadent” became more and more frequent when discussing American film.

The political turning point of 1948 led to significant change in connection to both the policy of compulsory agricultural deliveries and policy of creating repertories for movie theaters. As the Croatian author Goran Tribuson noted,

with the departure of Comrade Kostya<sup>12</sup> and the members of the Komsomol, into the domestic cinemas rode the victorious John Wayne and Gary Cooper, and American submariners and naval officers come into port to celebrate Iwo Jima, swordsmen come bobbing along with foils drawn, along with sailors with hooks on

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>11</sup> Citation from Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 438.

<sup>12</sup> The allusion is to the Soviet film *The Shepherd Kostya*.

their arms and bandages tied over one eye, while relaxed lovers with Clark Gable-like smiles on their faces come strolling in.<sup>13</sup>

On account of fundamental changes such as these, the Belgrade cinematic repertory evinced by 1949 nearly equal numbers of American and Soviet films.<sup>14</sup> In addition, after 1948 the number of viewers of Soviet films dropped, organized group visits to movie theaters ceased, and there was ever more critical valorization and censorship.<sup>15</sup>

A definitive break occurred in 1950, when not a single Soviet film was imported, and from that time on American cinematic products reigned supreme in the repertory. Two years later, 1952 became the first year in which not a single Soviet film was shown in Belgrade theaters.<sup>16</sup> The chronology of the definitive breakthrough of American film into Yugoslav cinemas corresponds to the final breakdown in cultural relations with the USSR, which came about in December 1949, when it was decided at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) to abandon socialist realism in creative work and to reestablish more lively cooperation with the outside world, something that quickly added an entirely new dimension to cultural life.<sup>17</sup> This tallies with analyses showing that in 1951, for the first time since the war, there was a liberalization of film imports from the West, especially of more recent films produced in Hollywood. At this time, too, Belgrade cinemas registered a unique phenomenon: the success of the film *Bathing Beauty*, which garnered, in just one theater but over six months, 333,000 viewers.<sup>18</sup> Never before *Bathing Beauty*, and never since, has any foreign movie had that kind of viewership in Belgrade. According to the remembrances of contemporaries, this film was experienced as an escape from misery and represented a mythical encounter between viewers and the metaphor

<sup>13</sup> Tribuson, *Rani dani*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Soviet films made up 41.92 percent in the repertory, while 38.78 percent were American.

<sup>15</sup> Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, 187.

<sup>16</sup> Dević, "Strani film u beogradskim bioskopima," 65, 81.

<sup>17</sup> Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, 185–86.

<sup>18</sup> Considering that Belgrade had at that time 426,000 inhabitants, the statistic demonstrates that about 80 percent of Belgrade's population saw this movie.

of a wealthy American everyday life filled with material abundance.<sup>19</sup> The cleanliness of crystal swimming pools “in which people bath even when they are not dirty” while drinking cocktails with unusual names functioned as a novelty in the socialist society and were a kind of indicator of the status of Yugoslav society, which demonstrated that it was interested in material abundance and free time.<sup>20</sup>

Based on these statistics it is clear that American film received a second chance in Yugoslavia after the clash with the USSR in 1948. Therefore it was no accident that one of the first American officials to visit Yugoslavia in these changed circumstances was Eric Johnston, the president of the American Chamber of Commerce, one of the advocates of the use of American film for propaganda purposes, who at the time of his arrival in Belgrade was also the director of the Association of Film Producers and Distributors of America. Conducting serious foreign policy talks, Johnston also inaugurated a new phase in the marketing of American films in Yugoslavia.<sup>21</sup> He aimed to carry out the Americanization of Yugoslavia by means of film, and in doing so, he apparently knew to make use of Josip Broz Tito’s partiality toward that form of art. In fact, Johnston stated during an informal conversation with Yugoslav officials that he had heard “that the Marshal likes watching films a lot, and that he views one every evening.” On that occasion he requested that the American chargé d’affaires arrange for the American embassy to “place at the Marshal’s disposal without payment of any kind” the films that they received.<sup>22</sup> It was not by chance, of course, that Eric Johnston, who was obviously an important foreign policy negotiator and also the president of the Association of Film Producers and Distributors of America from its founding in 1946 until his death in 1963, turned up in countries behind the Iron Curtain at key political moments. Thus Johnston was, in 1948, following the conflict with the USSR, the first American official in Yugoslavia, and in 1958, immediately after the signing of the Soviet-American agree-

<sup>19</sup> Lučić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do tvista: igranke u Beogradu 1945–1963*, 83.

<sup>20</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 450.

<sup>21</sup> AJ, KMJ, 1-2-a/74, Kratka zabeleška o razgovoru maršala Tito sa Eric Johnstonom, October 4, 1948 (top secret).

<sup>22</sup> AJ, KMJ, 1-2-a/74, Zabeleška o razgovoru načelnika Price sa Ericom Johnstonom, October 4, 1948.

ment on cultural cooperation between the two superpowers, he was invited to Moscow, where he represented the American film industry in negotiations on cinematic exchanges with the USSR. Thanks to this visit, in September and October of that year, the Soviets agreed to begin the distribution of ten American films; among them were *Roman Holiday*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and *Oklahoma*.<sup>23</sup>

The talks with Johnston in Belgrade in 1948 assuredly cleared the way for and laid the groundwork for the signing of the Information Media Guaranty (IMG) program in 1952 between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) and the United States. This was an agreement about the purchase of books, records, and movies with dinars, at an extremely favorable exchange rate. The IMG provided especially favorable terms for the marketing of American movies in Yugoslavia, because it enabled their importation at artificially low prices.<sup>24</sup> One could say that Belgrade was paying its bills to Hollywood for the most part with money obtained from Washington.

The change in Yugoslavia's foreign policy orientation, but also the American IMG program, which supported that change, certainly contributed to the way American film completely dominated the repertoires of Yugoslav cinemas in the 1950s. The purchase of U.S. movies based on the IMG program of 1952 grew year after year, from 26 films in 1951 to 197 in 1956.<sup>25</sup>

In the 1960s, the Yugoslav cinematic market was completely open to foreign films, which made up 85 percent of its repertory, with domestic films accounting for 15 percent.<sup>26</sup> About two hundred films per year were imported at this time, although the second half of the decade showed an increase in the number of imports, from 208 in 1966 to 307 in 1969.<sup>27</sup>

In 1960 Yugoslavia imported 45 films from America, 49 from Western Europe, and 41 from Eastern Europe.<sup>28</sup> These numbers match

<sup>23</sup> Hixon, *Parting the Curtain*, 155.

<sup>24</sup> AJ, 142, F-128, Analiza uvoza i prometa filmova, January 1963.

<sup>25</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, K-21, II/4-a-3, O problemima filma, 1957.

<sup>26</sup> AJ, 142, F-128, Analiza uvoza i prometa filmova, January 1963; "Razgovor sa direktorom Jugoslavija-filma," *Filmski svet*, no. 62, November 11, 1962; M. Čolić, *Ćudi našeg filma* (Belgrade, 1997), 342.

<sup>27</sup> Nemanjić, *Filmska i pozorišna publika Beograda*, 172–73.

<sup>28</sup> AJ, 559, F-170, 1961, Izveštaj Komisije za kulturne veze s inostranstvom za 1960 godinu.



up to some degree with reporting from the weekly *NIN*, according to which it was forecast that the country's repertory in 1960 would consist of 50 percent American film and 50 percent film from other countries, including domestic sources; this demonstrates that quotas for film imports from individual countries were projected in advance. In the cinematic season 1960/1961, 130 foreign films were shown in theaters across Serbia, of which 35 percent were from the United States, around 40 percent from Western Europe (England, France, and Italy), and around 15 percent domestic.<sup>29</sup>

The policy on importing films, which from the 1950s on decidedly favored American productions, underwent changes, if small ones, because of foreign policy shocks and the distancing from Washington that was brought about by the First Conference of Nonaligned Countries in 1961. Thus, in 1962, 208 foreign films were purchased, of which 48 were from the USSR and 35 from America. This was the first negative balance in Yugoslav import records for American film, compared to Soviet, since 1948.<sup>30</sup>

In 1963, 148 feature films were imported from Western countries and 39 from East European countries. In the projected quota, however, it had been suggested that 100–120 productions should be brought in from the West, and 60–80 from the East, but from this it is clear that many additional films from the West were brought in over the planned amount (23 percent more), and that many fewer films were brought in from the East (65 percent less than the minimum foreseen in the quota).<sup>31</sup>

In the first half of the decade of the sixties (1961–65), films from four different nations comprised the mainstay of movie offerings in Belgrade—American, French, Italian, and English; the viewership of American films showed a steady increase, from 42.1 percent in 1961 to 45.2 percent in 1965. The second half of the decade was marked by an even greater interest in American film, and in 1970 imports had grown

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<sup>29</sup> Paramentić, "Hajdemo u bioskop," 288.

<sup>30</sup> "Porast našeg filmskog uvoza," *NIN*, March 31, 1963, 12.

<sup>31</sup> AJ, 142, F-128, Zaključci doneti na III sednici Koordinacionog odbora za uvoz filmova, održano 10. maja 1963. godine.

by 44.2 percent in comparison to 1966, and by 316.6 percent over the beginning of the decade.<sup>32</sup>

The statistical yearbooks for Belgrade from 1960 to 1970 single out American, French, German, Italian, and domestic films in their analysis of viewership according to the number of tickets sold. According to these statistics, U.S. films garnered as many viewers as films from all other countries combined.<sup>33</sup> In addition, analysis of imported films by genre also points to the dominance of Hollywood productions—the most numerous films were crime dramas, Westerns, and spy movies.<sup>34</sup>

Film magazines put together by distribution houses also demonstrated the popularity of American cinema. Thus, for example in the summer review of films at the Trade Union Hall in 1964, viewers were able to take in 7 American, 6 French, and 2 Italian movies, along with one each from Spain, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup> The repertory of Belgrade cinemas from August, 1965, also points to the domination of American film—at that time American films were being shown in 23 cinemas, while there were English films in 7, French in 6, and Soviet, Japanese, and Mexican films in only one each.<sup>36</sup> On the occasion of the retrospective of “Morava Film”, in which the films of this distributor from the period 1946 to 1966 were presented, there were 20 American, 7 French, and 6 English movies, while there were only a total of 3 from the Soviet Union.<sup>37</sup> Parallel to this, a small retrospective of children’s films was also held, providing the opportunity to view 4 American films and one each from England, Germany, and Yugoslavia.<sup>38</sup> As was noted in the press, “both distributors and venue

<sup>32</sup> Nemanjić, *Filmska i pozorišna publika Beograda*, 171–73.

<sup>33</sup> *Statistički godišnjak Beograda 1960*, Beograd, 1960, 136; *Statistički godišnjak Beograda 1970*, Beograd, 1970, 152.

<sup>34</sup> AJ, 142, F-128, Zaključci doneti na II sednici Koordinacionog odbora za uvoz filmova, održanoj 10 maja 1963.

<sup>35</sup> *Politika*, August 18, 1964, 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Politika*, August 24, 1965, 17.

<sup>37</sup> A complete list of films screened would look like this: twenty American, seven French, six English, three Soviet, three Italian, three Japanese, two Swedish, two Yugoslav, and one each from Germany, Spain, Denmark, Romania, and Poland (*Politika*, November 27, 1966), 30.

<sup>38</sup> *Politika*, November 27, 1966, 30.

management would answer the question of where American dominance in film comes from by saying: "The people like American movies the most."<sup>39</sup>

The predilection for American film, on the part of the government and not just the distributors, is also evident in the example of state institutions, above all in the events of the Pioneer organizations. According to the testimony of the writer Goran Tribuson, one first developed the custom of going out to the movies in Pioneer clubs, which offered free showings every Sunday. Thus, in his account, even in the 1950s the Pioneer Center in Bjelovar always showed "twenty short Disney cartoons and copies of Reed's *The Running Man*, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, and *Hondo* with John Wayne." He added that "they showed the only stuff they had *ad nauseam*"; the Croatian writer noted that as a schoolboy he saw *The Refugees* "ten weeks in a row."<sup>40</sup> The facts that not a single Soviet film was included in the selection of movies for the "Morava Film" retrospective mentioned above, and that the films shown to Pioneer organizations were mostly American, are of special importance, especially when one recalls how much importance was attached to the education of children in communist regimes. A study by Dejan Vujanić also attests to the domination of American film in terms of children's visits to theaters in Banjaluka; for "student movie presentations," the films listed were *Shane*, *Rear Window*, *Duel in the Jungle*, *In the Wild West*, and *Tarzan's Jungle Rebellion*.<sup>41</sup>

The presence of American film on the playlists in other East European countries was radically different. In the Soviet Union, five American films were imported on average each year in the 1950s and 1960s, and it mattered that these were films that gave "a critical view of life in the United States" or that they were comedies and musicals (among the most popular of these were *Some Like It Hot* and *Apartment*).<sup>42</sup> In East

<sup>39</sup> Čolić, "Više uvoznika, manje dobrih filmova," *Politika*, January 16, 1968, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Tribuson, *Rani dani*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> D. Vujanić, *Filmska kultura u Banjaluci i Bosanskoj Krajini 1953–1969* (Banjaluka, 2011), 73.

<sup>42</sup> M. Siefert, "From Cold War to Wary Peace: American Culture in the USSR and Russia," in *The Americanization of Europe*, ed. A. Stephan (New York, 2007), 196; Y. Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War. Raising the Iron Curtain* (Philadelphia, 2003), 129.

Germany, only six American films were shown in all of the 1950s.<sup>43</sup> In the USSR there certainly existed the fear, as Yale Richmond saw it, that the Soviet public, upon viewing American films, would realize that people in the West did not have to stand in long lines for food or that they did not have to live in apartments that were small and of inferior quality. Instead, the people in the Western world, of whom the Soviets were so afraid, wore modern clothes, drove good cars, and enjoyed many conveniences that were not available in the USSR.<sup>44</sup> The position of American film was more favorable in Poland, where from 1945 to 1967, 336 films were imported, and where the authorities labored to keep a balance between imports from the East and the West. Aside from Westerns, some of the favorite American films enjoyed by the Polish public were ones with Marilyn Monroe, as well as *The Barefoot Contessa* with Ava Gardner; “more serious” movies also achieved popularity, such as *Citizen Kane*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *From Here to Eternity*. Censorship in Poland, however, was more strict than in Yugoslavia, so that Polish filmgoers did not get to see *Dr. Zhivago* until 1989, and neither could they watch any of the James Bond movies.<sup>45</sup>

There were striking differences between Yugoslavia and the countries behind the Iron Curtain with regard to American film; these differences were useful to Belgrade’s foreign policy, and the Yugoslav press underscored them. There were some letters to the popular Yugoslav magazines *Džuboks* and *Filmski svet*, from readers in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, that seem to have been published simply to confirm those differences with as many countries as possible. What was especially attractive in all this, of course, was the fact that people from the communist countries, including from the “cradle of communism,” admitted that Yugoslav communism was different, and better, than their own. A male reader from Bulgaria asked, therefore, in 1965, for the editors of *Filmski svet* to send him several issues of publication, “because from your magazine we learn a great many interesting things about film.” The response that he received was as follows: “We would be very glad to send you a few issues of our magazine, but we

<sup>43</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 128.

<sup>45</sup> A. Antoszek and K. Delaney, “Poland: Transmissions and Translations,” in *The Americanization of Europe*, ed. A. Stephan, 224–26.

have been informed that they won't reach you. Your customs authorities will intercept our publication and not deliver it to the addressee."<sup>46</sup> Following the break with the USSR, the practice of speaking cynically about the countries behind the Iron Curtain thus reached even to entertainment magazines. Somewhat later, a female reader from Bulgaria asked the editors of *Filmski svet* how she could subscribe to the magazine, and she received this unadorned answer: "Unfortunately it is not possible for you to subscribe, because your censors will not allow our magazine into the country."<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the press, even in the letters from readers, politicized the relationship to film, insisting in a public space that Yugoslavia was more progressive and modern than other countries with communist ideology.

## Censorship

The economic aspects of importation and distribution contributed to the great popularity of American films, above all through the IMG program, with the result that American hits flooded Yugoslav movie theaters. Their low costs of acquisition, however, did not mean that absolutely any film could be imported into Yugoslavia by any Yugoslav enterprise seeking to do so; it also did not mean that every film purchased was actually shown.

Based on the Law on Production, Circulation, and Exhibition of Films from 1961, imported movies could only be shown publicly in Yugoslavia if they had been approved by the Federal Commission for the Review of Films.<sup>48</sup> The system of film censorship was established

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<sup>46</sup> "Letters to the Editors," *Filmski svet*, no. 532, March 11, 1965.

<sup>47</sup> "Letters to the Editors," *Filmski svet*, no. 758, July 10, 1969, 34.

<sup>48</sup> AJ, Savezna komisija za pregled filmova (147), F-1-1-167, Nacrt Zakona o proizvodnji, prometu i prikazivanju filmova, 1961. The Federal Commission for the Review of Films, headquartered in Belgrade, carried out the review of foreign films and films made in cooperation with foreign producers, and it gave approval for public showings of those films. The commission had at least twenty-five members. It handed down decisions on the public showing of films in sessions comprised of five to seven members, based on majority vote. (AJ, 147, F-1-218, Uredba o Saveznoj komisiji za pregled filmova.)

immediately after the entrance of troops of the Red Army and the Yugoslav Partisans into Belgrade in 1944.<sup>49</sup> The founding of the Agitation and Propaganda Commission of the Central Committee (CC) of the CPY in 1945 contributed further to the way films were placed under control; this commission, headed by Milovan Đilas, had the tasks, inter alia, of managing all issues connected with film, the organization of visits to cinemas, and the enticement of large numbers of the working-class public to see films.<sup>50</sup>

The state organ charged with censoring films was originally called the Censorship Commission of the Film Company of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. It was founded in 1946. Its title was “softened” and changed to the Commission for the Review of Films of the Committee for Cinematography of the Government of the FPRY in 1949, and then in 1953 it became the Federal Commission for the Review of Films.<sup>51</sup> After 1963, censorship authority was divided. At that time the republic-level commissions for the review of domestic film production came into operation, while the Federal Commission censored imported movies. What all of these commissions had in common were the criteria by which it was determined which movies could not be shown publicly. These were films “whose content was directed against the social or governmental order of Yugoslavia, against peace or friendship among nations, or against humanity; the content of which offends the honor or reputation of the peoples of Yugoslavia or other nations; and the content of which damages public morality or has a harmful influence on the upbringing of young people.”<sup>52</sup>

These criteria were, on the one hand, formulated with an ideological orientation, and on the other hand, changed with the direction of Yugoslav foreign policy. Ideology most often prohibited topics such as monarchy, religion, democracy, civil rights, sex, violence, and criminal characters, all in the aim of forming the “new man.”<sup>53</sup> Changes in the foreign policy of Yugoslavia also altered censors’ considerations

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<sup>49</sup> For more on the institutions of film censorship in Yugoslavia, see Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, 260–88.

<sup>50</sup> Dimić, *Agitprop kultura*, 214.

<sup>51</sup> AJ, 405, S-1, Kratak pregled razvoja i organizacije domaće kinematografije.

<sup>52</sup> AJ, 147, F-2-3.

<sup>53</sup> Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, 267.

of films allowed into the cinemas. The first to be subject to this were films imported from the former “enemy states” (Germany, Italy), and in the period up to 1950, special attention was paid to censoring the films from the Western allies. The American jazz film *Rhapsody in Blue* was banned in 1949, because it was considered to be “a cacophony of decadent music and propaganda.”<sup>54</sup> But a turning point was reached by 1950, when, parallel to the tightening of censorship on Soviet films, a relaxation toward the West set in.

In the indisputable Yugoslav openness to American cinema, it is to some degree unexpected, however, that the playlists of Yugoslav movie theaters in the 1960s contained explicitly Cold War-related American movies. They included *Dr. No*, one of the films about the legendary Agent 007, James Bond.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Yugoslav filmgoers in this period could see two other noticeably “tougher” Cold War creations, *Dr. Strangelove*<sup>56</sup> and *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*,<sup>57</sup> which had an explicitly anti-Soviet messages.

Although director Stanley Kubrick condemns American militarism in *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and ridicules both of the ideologically opposed sides (especially the American general, Jack D. Ripper), the representatives of the governments of the two superpowers are not shown in the same way. While the American president is depicted as an upright and likable man, the Soviet representatives are shown in considerably more negative light. The Soviet Ambassador to the United States, de Sadesky, is caricatured as a Soviet spy, and one of the lines placed in his mouth (“Our people want more nylons and washing machines”) points to the misery of life in the USSR by juxtaposing the unrealizable wishes of Soviet men and women with wishes that in the normal world can be fulfilled. The Yugoslav filmgoer was, probably, able to react to this line the same way an American would, for in Yugoslavia, at that time, nylons and washing machines were not impossible to obtain. In the film the most important man in the Kremlin is depicted as an alcoholic, who, because of his binges, cannot grasp

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>55</sup> “Dr. No—Dzems Bond je tu!” *Politika*, February 25, 1967, 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), dir. Stanley Kubrick.

<sup>57</sup> *The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming* (1966), dir. Norman Jewison.



the seriousness of the situation. Russians and communists are referred to as “Ruskies” and “commies,” and the film abounds in lines such as “These commies are tricky,” while the American general refers to the Soviet ambassador as “a communist scum!” For these reasons, it is really unusual that this Cold War movie, full of open mockery of the Soviets, as well as of Communism in general, found its way onto the playlists of Yugoslav cinemas, but we also have to consider the information from the Commission for Film Review, which notes that *Dr. Strangelove* was approved “on the condition that some dialogues are removed from certain scenes.”<sup>58</sup>

The case of Kubrick’s work demonstrates that, in cases of censorship, prohibitions were not always applied; rather censors sometimes resorted to the cutting of individual scenes or lines. Despite the removal of certain lines, however, *Dr. Strangelove* did actually reach Yugoslav movie theaters and did not share the fate of the film *Romanoff and Juliet*,<sup>59</sup> which failed to make it past the censors, “because of the bitterness of its satire aimed at the dignity and reputation of other peoples.”<sup>60</sup> This justification is not surprising, since the action of the film is set in the imaginary East European country of Concordia, over whose favor the Americans and the Soviets are fighting, and whose leader wants to have both great powers as allies. The situation grows more complicated when the son of the Soviet ambassador, Igor Romanov, falls in love with Julia, the daughter of an American diplomat, with the effect that Shakespeare’s tale of the clash between the Montagues and the Capulets is transferred to the time of the Cold War, with feuding communist and capitalist families. A certain similarity between Yugoslavia and the country of Concordia was surely one of the reasons that *Romanoff and Juliet* was banned in Yugoslavia.

Another explicitly Cold War film from America is *The Russians Are Coming*, which began to be shown in Yugoslavia in 1969. This movie, like *Dr. Strangelove*, made fun of American paranoia toward and fear of an ideological enemy, and it opens with a Soviet submarine accidentally running aground on the American coast. As this was described in the newspaper *Politika*, the film is a comedy “that mocks, with an

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<sup>58</sup> AJ, 147, F-1, 1-2, 1-896.

<sup>59</sup> *Romanoff and Juliet* (1961), dir. Peter Ustinov.

<sup>60</sup> AJ, 147, F-1, 1-2, 1-855.



abundance of wit and comical situations, the mistrust and prejudices of the great powers in their race for supremacy"; it was "ironic in equal measure toward both sides."<sup>61</sup> As was the case, however, in *Dr. Strangelove*, the two sides in *The Russians Are Coming* are not depicted in the same way. The film, to be fair, pokes fun at Americans and their panic at and fear of Russians, but, it derides Russians much more effectively, presenting a militant version of them, dressed in black uniforms and leather jackets, and, in some scenes, depicting them as noble savages.<sup>62</sup> It could be that the airing of this movie in Yugoslavia in 1969, one year after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, had a cathartic effect, because at that time there were also fears of a Soviet invasion of Yugoslavia, and for its part Yugoslavia strongly criticized the Soviet intervention.

Films that made fun of the Soviets, met with completely different handling, of course, in the USSR and were not permitted to be shown. *Dr. Strangelove* was aired only in the club of Moscow journalists, and only to a small group of selected journalists and their friends at that, while at the very top of the list of forbidden movies in the USSR was, along with *Dr. Zhivago*, none other than *The Russians Are Coming*, which only the uppermost members of the political elite could view at closed showings.<sup>63</sup>

It is obvious that *Dr. Strangelove* and *The Russians Are Coming* were ideal choices to show in Yugoslavia, which, as a country located between East and West, was certain to view with sympathy films that made fun of both superpowers, and in doing so reaffirmed the correctness of Yugoslav foreign policy. Conversely, though, both of these films were American productions, and, although at first glance they present the two sides equally, it turned out, as in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, that all animals are equal but some are more equal than others. As in many similar situations, when it was necessary to line up on either the American or the Soviet side, these films gave absolute priority to the former.

When thinking about censorship, the essential fact is that in the 1960s the number of prohibited films shrank significantly. This is one of the indicators of a certain democratization of Yugoslav society, at

<sup>61</sup> M. Čolić, "Rusi dolaze," *Politika*, March 31, 1969.

<sup>62</sup> *Rusi dolaze, Rusi dolaze (The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming!*, 1966), dir. Norman Jewison.

<sup>63</sup> Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 130–31.

least on the issue of foreign movies. In a similar way, Polish society was democratizing, too; in 1969, twenty-one films were banned, but in 1970 the number fell to six.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that two films were banned in Yugoslavia in 1969 and twenty-one in Poland that same year, a country regarded as the most liberal behind the Iron Curtain, points to the drastically more favorable situation in Yugoslavia compared to other East European countries with regard to foreign (above all, American) movies.

In the same way that Yugoslavia had censorship of films, the USIA had its mechanism for exporting films with a strong political imprint. Utilizing the experience of World War II, Hollywood began to play an important political role in the Cold War also, and the film industry was pulled into a Cold War conflict as early as 1947, when representatives of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was invited to Los Angeles and a strategy for the cinematic struggle against communism started to form.<sup>65</sup> The results of this strategy were twofold: on the one hand, explicitly anticommunist films were made, and on the other hand, people began to keep track more intensively of what kind of image of America was being sent out into the world via Hollywood films. This meant that by 1947 the American Film Association had already decided that *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Tobacco Road* could not be shown abroad, "because they could be used as propaganda against the USA," since they gave "an unrepresentative picture of American life."<sup>66</sup>

In that same year, Senator Joseph McCarthy sped up the process of the creation of blacklists, and in November 1947, at a meeting of Hollywood producers, the Hollywood Ten list was drawn up, containing American set designers, directors, and producers who in the course of interrogations by the HUAC refused to testify about their political convictions. Because of these actions, they were sentenced to jail terms, and after serving their time further work for them was impossible or made very difficult.<sup>67</sup> Hollywood itself worked parallel to this typical

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<sup>64</sup> Antoszek and Delaney, "Poland: Transmissions and Translations," 226.

<sup>65</sup> S.J. Whitfield, *The Culture of Cold War* (Baltimore and London, 1996), 127.

<sup>66</sup> Leo C. Rosten, "Movies and Propaganda," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 254, Nov. 1947, 118–119.

<sup>67</sup> In its own version of the witch hunt, the HUAC named 324 Hollywood personalities and put them on the blacklist from 1951 to 1957.

Cold War campaign, and by 1954 more than forty explicitly anticommunist films had been made, most significant—and most propagandistic—among them *I Married a Communist* (1949), *The Red Menace* (1949), *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (1951), *Jet Pilot* (1951), *My Son John* (1952), *Red Nightmare* (1955), and *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955).<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, films that show the dark side of America were undesirable for export, and, guided by this philosophy, the USIA had by 1957 forbidden the export of approximately 30 movies to Yugoslavia. Among them were *On the Waterfront*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *From Here to Eternity*. It is characteristic of the process that these films could be exported from America to other countries and that they were prohibited only for Yugoslavia. Stubborn efforts on the part of Yugoslav distributors to buy these films at market prices met with failure, with the explanation from American movie companies “that the films that the USIA has forbidden will not be sold to Yugoslavia under any conditions.” In face-to-face contacts with American representatives, these bans were justified with the statement that “the American government will not finance propaganda that is not in the interest of America.”<sup>69</sup>

In 1962, U.S. censors were also extremely picky in the selection of films in the context of the program of technical assistance for Yugoslavia. Permission for export was only given to those films that, in general, praised the American way of life, confirming once more that Washington viewed cinematic production as a powerful weapon of Cold War propaganda. All films that took a critical approach to American realities were prohibited to Yugoslavia if they were being paid for out of the technical assistance coffers.<sup>70</sup> It is interesting to note that, before Elia Kazan became interesting for the Yugoslav market (something that probably received additional impetus from the American prohibition on his films being exported to Yugoslavia, as well as American accusations that he was a leftist), this author was also the target of

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<sup>68</sup> For more about these films, see Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 260–62; Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War*; M. Rogin, “Kiss Me Deadly: Communism, Motherhood, and Cold War Movies,” *Representations*, no. 6 (Spring 1984), 1–36.

<sup>69</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/4-a-3, Američki film na našem repertoaru, 1957.

<sup>70</sup> AJ, 142, F-69-02-40/8a, Informacija o kupoprodaji filmova izmedju “Jugoslavija filma” i istočnoevropskih zemalja.

Yugoslav censors. To be specific, his film *A Streetcar Named Desire* had been approved by the Federal Commission for the Review of Films but only with the comment that the work “was not recommended due to morbid themes.”<sup>71</sup> Later, when America’s “morbid themes” had become desirable items in Yugoslav movie theaters, on account of the grim view of the United States that they presented, and also because of the popular film stars that played in these movies (Marlon Brando, James Dean), it was to Yugoslav auteurs that the censors and government authorities began worriedly assigning “morbid themes.”

### The Relationship of the Public to American and East European Film

The predominance of American movies, both in the policies of distributors and in the wishes of the public, was patent. This suited the authorities, for such a situation showed that a socialist country with a communist ideology inclined to the wishes of viewers—and also to market, and therefore capitalist, criteria. It was as if a logic was at work here whereby benefit could be extracted from detriment (and for a communist system, the Americanization of the taste of its citizens was certainly a harm). In a report of the Commission for International Cultural Relations it was stressed—both as a type of vindication for internal consumption and as a demonstration of the democratization before the eyes of the world—that “one should keep in mind the fact that our film industry, as a branch of the economy, is developing its relations with the rest of the world on normal commercial foundations.”<sup>72</sup> This, however, was not completely accurate. The existence of statutory quotas for the acquisition of films from Eastern Europe had no necessary link to “commercial foundations,” but rather was politically motivated in the interest of maintaining a continuing balance between East and West. From the press and from numerous analyses that have been carried out, one can see, after all, that predetermined quotas were not able to ensure the placement of East European films. Simply put, the public

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<sup>71</sup> Miloradović, *Lepota pod nadzorom*, 273.

<sup>72</sup> AJ, 559, F-170, 1961, Izveštaj Komisije za kulturne veze s inostranstvom za 1960. godinu.

did not want to see those movies, and distributors, by including them in repertoires, continually ran up losses.

The untenableness of quotas surely contributed to the profitability of American films, which went along with their popularity and high viewership. These movies were more than profitable for domestic distributors—the average price of an American film was around \$4,000<sup>73</sup>—and, accordingly some American films (such as *Tarzan* films, *Mogambo*, and *Bathing Beauty*) brought in profits of between 20 and 40 million dinars. In contrast to American films, East European films brought only losses to distributors; the majority of those films cost between five and seven million dinars, but the proceeds from them were for the most part around a million dinars.<sup>74</sup> In today's dollars, that means that an American film, which cost \$4,000, could bring a distributor profit on the order of \$66,000 to \$133,000. In addition, the conversion of values in dinars to dollars demonstrates that the average price of Soviet and East European movies was between \$16,000 and \$23,000, and the receipts from them came to around \$3,000. Thus, American films were initially four to five times cheaper than Soviet movies, but they earned about twenty times more profit, while Soviet films recorded only losses.

In addition to the numbers, newspaper reports as well as announcements from various Party gatherings attest to the unpopularity of Soviet film. "All the data points to the fact that Belgraders do not want to watch Russian or East European films. It's like a punishment when Russian or East European films make it onto our playlists."<sup>75</sup> The frequency of such assessments necessarily lead the ideological commissions to rethink ways to grow beyond "a certain ignorant attitude toward the cultural and scientific achievements of the USSR and other socialist countries."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> This would be worth around \$30,000 in today's dollars.

<sup>74</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/4-a-3, Nabavka stranih filmova, zarade preduzeća i repertoarska politika, 1957.

<sup>75</sup> IAB, fond GK SKS Beograd, K-209, Zapisnik sa sednice koja je održana 11. septembra 1965. godine o problemima delovanja i uticaja inostrane propagande u Beogradu i o problemu odlaska u inostranstvo radne snage iz Beograda.

<sup>76</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b-(147-161), K-9, Zapisnik sa sastanka Komisije za ideološki rad CK SKJ, 31.

Statistics and questionnaires also showed that the public not only didn't want to see Soviet movies, but also didn't want to see the Soviet Union on the silver screen at all. Respondents to a questionnaire containing a query on "which parts of the world do you wish to see in movies" answered: America (247), Africa (110), Europe (58), Japan (35), and the Hawaiian islands (33), with only 6 responses mentioning the Soviet Union.<sup>77</sup>

Although the acquisition of East European films was part and parcel of Yugoslav foreign policy, and something that fell under the purview of state interest, actual circumstances (the ever more open refusal of cinemas to purchase and show such movies, their unprofitability, the attitudes of the public) influenced the Commission for Guidance to Cinematography to conclude "that with East European countries we should establish relations that are exclusively economic and market-based, and accordingly we should buy only films that interest us."<sup>78</sup>

Hard statistics, when the subject is East European movies, do not give a realistic picture of their popularity and viewership, for the conditions surrounding such showings were even less fortuitous than number show. Thus in 1967 there were seventy-eight films imported from Eastern Europe, of which only ten actually played in Belgrade movie theaters (4 Soviet, 4 Czechoslovak, and 2 Polish). Thus the prescribed quotas were to some extent formally respected, but real life erased them. This conversation with distributors about East European films is indicative:

Why are you not showing the movies?

"They're not commercially viable," said the people from Beograd Film.

"So why are you buying them?"

Instead of answering, they shrugged their shoulders and remained silent.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> A. Todorović, *Filmski ukus kod omladine* (Belgrade, 1971), 68–69.

<sup>78</sup> AJ, 405, S-1, Izveštaj o uvozu, 1960.

<sup>79</sup> M. Čolić, "Filmska diskriminacija," *Politika*, March 19, 1968, 5.

The shoulder-shrugs and silence had to do with the political decisions behind the acquisition of films, of course. Negativity was also present in the selection of theaters for showings—Western “hits” usually played in centrally located movie theaters, with the East European ones in outlying or working-class areas, and for just a few days at that.<sup>80</sup>

Although the public’s mood and the distributors’ behavior as well as the attitudes of the state about East European film are all crystal clear, it would happen from time to time that Soviet and East European films would gain increased attention. Ongoing diplomatic developments had an influence on this, of course. Thus, in the period between 1961 and 1963, for example, when Yugoslav–American relations had fallen to their lowest point since 1948 following the First Conference of Nonaligned States, there were moments when Soviet film garnered praise, which was otherwise very sparse in the rest of that decade. Right after this conflict with America emerged, *NIN* published a long article about the film *Clear Skies* by Grigori Chukhrai; *NIN* praised not only the movie but also the current policies of the Soviet Union, “because [this film] is coming at the right time: at the moment when the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR is carrying out (most probably) its definitive settling of accounts with the dark forces of Stalinism.” All things considered, the intention seems to have been to show, by the example of *Clear Skies*, as well as the relationship of the Kremlin to its director and his extremely courageous depiction of conditions in the Soviet Union, that the USSR had entered a phase of liberalization.

A change in the writing in *NIN*, occasioned by political changes, was also evident in December 1961, when, in the column titled “At Home and Abroad,” which was usually dominated by news from Hollywood, reports began appearing under the title “New Soviet Films.”<sup>81</sup> The troubles in Yugoslav–American bilateral relations between 1961 and 1963 manifested themselves to some extent in the writing in *Filmski svet* as well. This popular magazine, which was almost completely dedicated to American film, published, on several occasions, articles on creative works from behind the Iron Curtain. In May 1961,

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<sup>80</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 182.

<sup>81</sup> *NIN*, December 10, 1961, 12.



before the dispute with America, the readers of *Filmski svet* were offered an article that presented a short history of Soviet film.<sup>82</sup> A year later they were able to learn more about both Polish film<sup>83</sup> and young Polish actors,<sup>84</sup> and they also got updates about Bulgarian movies;<sup>85</sup> in 1963 there was also a detailed report about the largest Soviet film company, Mosfilm.<sup>86</sup> Still, these five published items over a span of three years, during which time readers continued to be “bombarded” with news from Hollywood, could not have a significant influence on either the filmgoing public or conditions in the Yugoslav film industry. It would appear that these were merely small concessions made to political allies in moments of “discord” with America.

Policies governing the import of films also underwent certain changes on account of the distancing from Washington. In 1962, for the first time since 1948, there were more Soviet films (48) imported than American ones (35).<sup>87</sup> Part of the wave of rapprochement with Soviet film was the visit of Soviet directors Mark Donskoi and Grigori Chukhrai to the Yugoslav film festival in Pula in 1963.<sup>88</sup> Even the visit of Khrushchev in 1963 had its “film dimension,” as reported on in the column “Film Barometer” in *NIN*, where one journalist wrote: “This week, in honor of our high-ranking Soviet guest, is a sign of our encounter with Soviet film. More than almost ever before, people in the film business have made public an entire set of films and, just for the occasion, made them available for everyone to inspect.”<sup>89</sup>

But another turnabout in foreign policy came quickly, after the meeting of Tito and Kennedy; relations between Washington and Belgrade were mended, and Yugoslavia’s status as a most-favored nation

<sup>82</sup> “Kratka istorija sovjetskog filma,” *Filmski svet*, no. 331, May 4, 1965, 5–7.

<sup>83</sup> D. Simović, “Poljski film juče i danas,” *Filmski svet*, no. 379, April 5, 1962, 18–19.

<sup>84</sup> D. Simović, “Mladi glumci poljske kinematografije,” *Filmski svet*, no. 382, April 26, 1962, 18–19.

<sup>85</sup> R. Jedlinski, “Novosti iz bugarskog filma,” *Filmski svet*, no. 395, July 26, 1962, 6–7.

<sup>86</sup> M. Čolić, “Mosfilm—najveće filmsko preduzeće Sovjetskog Saveza,” *Filmski svet*, no. 434, April 25, 1963.

<sup>87</sup> “Porast našeg filmskog uvoza,” *NIN*, March 31, 1963, 12.

<sup>88</sup> “Novo u svetu filma,” *NIN*, July 21, 1963, 10.

<sup>89</sup> “Filmski barometar,” *NIN*, September 1, 1963, 10.



was renewed. Many people greeted this turning point with relief, and that included film distributors, who, to the satisfaction of the public, were able to put Soviet and American films back into their appropriate places, as guided by the dictates of popular taste and the laws of the market.

The fate of Soviet film in Yugoslav theaters did from time to time provoke a reaction from guardians of revolutionary values, but their voices were rarely heard. In 1960, for instance, the issue of Yugoslavia's attitude to Soviet film was put this way, and accompanied by the observation that the ideological aspect of things had been sidelined by the commercial:

It is clear as day that American films are technically beyond compare, that they contain attractive content, that they are completely under the sway of the system of "stardom" and that they have a loyal following in our country, and that they are therefore more commercially viable than other movies...But all of this ignores something else: the majority of Soviet films have something in them that American films do not, and that has to be foregrounded once more: matters of principle and ideology.<sup>90</sup>

The "matters of principle and ideology," however, were of no interest to the public, something that was also decisively demonstrated during the period marking the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Three days before celebration, *Politika* analyzed the repertory of Belgrade cinemas, which were dominated by American films, and raised the questionnaire

is it actually possible that no one among the distributors, in the movie theaters themselves, or in one of the very numerous houses of culture and people's and workers' universities in the capital city, hit upon the idea of putting onto the playlists some of the exceptional old films about October, as a way of contributing to the exceptionalness of this moment? . . . Are we really to believe

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<sup>90</sup> D. Adamović, "Zapostavljena suština, ili: anomalije u strukturi našeg repertoara," *Filmski svet*, no. 265, January 28, 1960, 3.

that today's viewer could remain indifferent when presented with films such as *The Vyborg Side*, *The Return of Maxim*, *Secretary of the Regional Committee*, *We Are from Kronstadt*, *Lenin in October*, *Chapayev*, *The Youth of Maxim*, *Deputy from the Baltic*, and *The Man with a Rifle*?<sup>91</sup>

In fact, the contemporary viewer was more than indifferent, and a report about the removal from the repertory of the film *October Revolution* attests to this. It was published in *Politika* two weeks after the complaint aimed at Belgrade distributors about their not understanding either "today's viewer" or "today's place [in history]." This film is one of a series of examples about the attitude of distributors, and of the public, toward both Soviet films and Soviet themes. After its formal premiere, which was held on November 13, 1967, *October Revolution* was added to the schedule of films at the Jadran, a cinema in Belgrade, but it was shown for only one day, because the viewers, according to an article in *Politika*, "were all but warned by ushers at the doors of the theater not to watch the movie." According to the paper, the distributor was behind all this, because his goal was to have *October Revolution* remain for as short a time on the playlist as possible, "so that it could give up its place and times to the large selection of movies that would earn more money, and that were necessary for fulfilling the required commercial calculations."<sup>92</sup>

Although the 1960s was a decade of superior cinematic achievement on the part of East European artists, even the most highly regarded films, such as those directed by Jiří Menzel, Miloš Forman, Vera Chytilova, Andrzej Wajda, and Andrei Tarkovsky, had no chance with the public the way action movies, Westerns, and other Hollywood products did, because through them the people of a socialist state could live out their American dream, at least on the big screen.

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<sup>91</sup> D.A., "Kad se izgubi sluh," *Politika*, November 4, 1967, 11.

<sup>92</sup> M.Č., "Nekulturno, ružno," *Politika*, November 17, 1967, 11.

## Hollywood Stars and Yugoslavia

Movie stars have been a pillar of the film industry since the days of silent movies. Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, and Rudolph Valentino excited people in the twenties and thirties. Even in those days, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did not lag behind in the intoxication with Hollywood stars. When Rudolph Valentino died, all of Belgrade mourned for him, and all the postcards available with his face on them sold out.<sup>93</sup> The adoration of film stars continued in socialist Yugoslavia. In addition to what viewers saw on the theater screens, details from their private lives in mansions with swimming pools and impressive car collections added to fascination with these stars. The spell cast by film stars meant that, over time, they would become models of behavior, including their gestures, clothing, make-up, and smooching.<sup>94</sup> In this way, American models and standards were transmitted by means of film around the entire world.

The cult of film stars, therefore, continued in Yugoslavia even with its new ideology, so that Hollywood stars, especially after the beginning of the 1960s, once more became the idols of the Yugoslav public. Popular magazines wrote sensational stories about stars, but so did the weekly journals that pretended to be serious, such as *NIN*. This particular weekly, dedicated to political issues, displayed openly its sympathies with Hollywood and everything deriving from it. Thus it carried, for example a typically tabloid-like article about the actress Jayne Mansfield who had a “purple house, situated right on Sunset Boulevard, where people often swam in a swimming pool build in the shape of a heart and with a bottom made of a thousand mirrors.”<sup>95</sup> A glance at the headlines, columns, and subjects in the magazine *Filmski svet* in the 1960s demonstrates the Yugoslav enchantment with film stars: “Hollywood Dramas,” “What They’re Doing, What They’re Saying—Interesting Things from the World of the Stars,” “For Your Photo Album” (photographs of stars from around the world), “How Stars Eat,”

<sup>93</sup> “Odjek smrti Rudolfa Valentina,” *Politika*, August 29, 1926, 7.

<sup>94</sup> Morin, *The Stars*, 16, 166–67.

<sup>95</sup> V. Petrić, “Holivud više ne postoji,” *NIN*, January 15, 1961, 24.

“Unearthing the Secrets of the Stars.” They also wrote about Hollywood couples, their divorces and scandals, and their rises and falls.

Identification with the stars played an important role in this admiration, since the filmgoer generally focused on one specific star, who for him or her was an ideal and who represented a break from everyday life and an entrance into the world of the imagination. This was all created by the mechanisms of adoration of the stars, which included the collecting of photographs and autographs of film stars, the reading of movie-related illustrated magazines, and the scrupulous following of happenings in the film world, which separated the filmgoer from real life and transported him to another world.<sup>96</sup> What movies accomplished by virtue of their powerful medium and propagandistic force was a situation in which all generations were well disposed toward this flight from reality; for children and young people it was an escape from school, parents, obligations, and the authorities, while for older people this kind of identification represented an escape from the grayness of everyday life.

Since the majority of star-worshippers identified with their stars, the latter became over time mediators between the world of dreams and everyday life, and the statistics used in research of the relationships between viewers and stars demonstrate that a large number of devotees (35 percent) of a given star loved the possibility of identifying with him or her.<sup>97</sup> This emerges as quite significant in the period in which Yugoslavia began to “produce” its own stars and to create new heroes (especially from Partisan movies).

The magical attraction of Hollywood stars becomes increasingly apparent in every issue of *Filmski svet*, whose readers from all across Yugoslavia—as well as those from behind the Iron Curtain—regularly asked for photos, addresses, and details about the lives of famous actors. The most sought after were Marlon Brando, James Dean, Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, John Wayne, and Elizabeth Taylor. Leading stars took up a lot of space in the press, and *Filmski svet* even ran a series of feuilletons about James Dean.<sup>98</sup> Dean was an especially attractive figure for adulation and identification, because he was a star

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<sup>96</sup> Ž. Aleksić, “Film i delikvencija mladih,” *Gledišta*, 1, no. 1 (1960): 73–74.

<sup>97</sup> Morin, *The Stars*, 96.

<sup>98</sup> *Filmski svet*, nos. 390–402, June 31–September 13, 1962.

who had built his career fighting against the cruel world.<sup>99</sup> Above all it was adolescents, in their rebellions against authority, who identified with this hero, who died young in an accident in his Porsche and was famous mostly because of his role in the movie *Rebel Without a Cause*. But there were also those who dreamed that they, like James Dean, would rise from the lowest rung of the social ladder to the heights of stardom. Many readers' letters attest to people's identification with this star; as a boy from Sisak wrote, "The fates of James Dean and me are to some degree similar, in that I am also unlucky in love, like he was. . . . My only idol is James Dean." As if to strengthen the impression made by his devotion, the boy mentioned that he had at the moment "263 pictures of him."<sup>100</sup>

Marilyn Monroe received extra attention in the media. She is, possibly, the film star about whom more was written in the twentieth century than about anyone else, and for that reason it is no wonder that the historian Reinhold Wagnleitner would remark that because of her popularity, the Marilyn Monroe doctrine was far more important to ordinary people than the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>101</sup> In the 1960s, Yugoslav readers could peruse feuilletons about her life, articles about the price of the fame she was forced to bear, and about her tragic death. Thus we should not be surprised that many girls imagined themselves obtaining the fame of this diva (a girl from Livno professed: "I would like to become an actress, even if I get only the most insignificant roles. Marilyn Monroe is my idol."),<sup>102</sup> but men admired her even more, as this very indicative letter from a reader of *Filmski svet* reveals:

MM became an obsession of mine. I saw all her movies. *Let's Make Love* is the one I saw nine times, and that last one entitled *Marilyn Monroe* I saw twenty-one times. I've got pictures of her pinned up all over my room, and albums crammed full of cut-out newspaper articles about her; she's the biggest celebrity of our century.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Morin, *The Stars*, 121.

<sup>100</sup> "Film—očima naših čitalaca," *Filmski svet*, no. 746, April 17, 1969, 34.

<sup>101</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 4.

<sup>102</sup> "Film—očima naših čitalaca," *Filmski svet*, no. 720, October 17, 1968, 35.

<sup>103</sup> "Obožavam Merilin Monro," *Filmski svet*, no. 720, October 17, 1968, 35.

Besides their presence in magazines, Hollywood stars were present in other parts of Yugoslavs' daily lives in various ways; they appeared on wrappers of chocolate bars, and postcards with their likenesses were sold at newspaper kiosks all across the country. Chewing gum Favorit featured one of the first series of pictures of the faces of foreign film stars that people could paste into albums; they came wrapped around individual pieces of chewing gum, and one had to unwrap them and then flatten them out by sticking them into a heavy book. One childhood recollection about the manner of straightening out these little pictures serves as a metaphor for the Yugoslav system, in which both Marx and Hollywood were possible: according to the memoirs of the writer Goran Tribuson, Marx's *Capital* proved especially effective in flattening the wrappers!<sup>104</sup>

The Ideological Commission of the CC of the LCY often took up the issue of the Yugoslav public's relation to stars, but they never passed any motions that would alter the status of Hollywood stars in Yugoslavia, or that would challenge or threaten it. Adoration of film stars was something to be analyzed, but not anything to be prevented. In a report that discussed cinematic ties to foreign countries, special attention was paid to the way people altered their physical appearance in order to try to resemble their favorite heroes or celebrated divas from the silver screen: "thus many women with black hair have become blondes à la Jean Harlow, or red-heads like Ginger Rogers, just as a lot of bobby-soxers nowadays try unsuccessfully to become the Yugoslav Brigitte or Marilyn, and their male followers aim for Marlon Brando or Gregory Peck."<sup>105</sup> The stimulus of film stars also affected the emancipation of women, and an analysis by the Council on Cinema noted that, because of film and the stimulus of stars, "the prototype of the modern woman from off the screen became in many regards the prototype of our desires, with a freer and less conventional life, with more respect, and with equal treatment," on account of which the Yugoslav woman "is less and less often an inaccessible mirage with the prescribed dimensions 36-24-40 and more and more is becoming our fellow passenger on the city bus, the typist from the company, or the female engineer in a factory."<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Tribuson, *Rani dani*, 55–56.

<sup>105</sup> AJ, 405, S-28, Oto Deneš, "Naše filmske veze s inostranstvom."

<sup>106</sup> AJ, 405, S-28, "Jugoslovenski film—šta je to?"

Examination of the contents of sessions of the ideological commissions and other Party bodies demonstrates that voices against the cult of stars were few and far between. One such voice was that of LCY member Boris Iljenko, who was bothered by the way the press “forced down young people’s throats incompetent and morally inadequate people, exclusively from the ranks of the stars, top athletes, actors, and singers.” And the question arises why “our entertaining publishing production does not affirm the ‘ordinary’ working person, the hero of everyday human situations, as a role model.”<sup>107</sup> Given that film stars were visible on theater screens, in the press, on chocolate candy wrappers and chewing gum, and the walls of bedrooms and given that some of them also visited Yugoslavia, it looked completely normal, even desirable, to take them as role models, and to dream about their lives. Seldom were attempts made to prevent the “fascination” with stars; one example was Sarajevo, where in the middle of the 1950s it was announced that “solicitation of photographs from Hollywood” was forbidden.<sup>108</sup>

When stimulated by the stars, people most often imitated their physical appearance. By the 1950s the men’s hairstyle known as the *tarzanka* was in fashion, which was replaced after the movie *A Streetcar Named Desire* by the *brandonka*, and women used make-up to try to conjure the appearance of their favorite Hollywood divas.<sup>109</sup> Another example of the imitation of film stars and the influence of American movies through manner of dress, behavior, and amusements was connected to the hit *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, which was shown in Yugoslav theaters from December 1965 on. The popularity of this movie provided the occasion for a masked ball in the discotheque “Kod Laze Šćera,” at which girls sported hair-dos and cigarette holders like Holly Golightly and guests competed in identifying lines from the film.<sup>110</sup>

There was an even stronger identification with characters from the cult film *Bonnie and Clyde*, which was about a young pair of gangsters who killed people and robbed banks across Texas during the great eco-

<sup>107</sup> AJ, 114/I, F-71, Stenografske beleške sa Sednice komisije za kulturno zabavni život i društvenu aktivnost omladine.

<sup>108</sup> Vujanić, *Filmska kultura u Banjaluci*, 71.

<sup>109</sup> Lučić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do tvista*, 116.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Lazar Šćerović, Beograd, November 20, 2008.

conomic crisis of the 1930s. In the view of critics around the world, the film was made to appeal to a young audience, because of the ongoing protests against various kinds of authority; thus the film provided one of the reasons that the antagonists Bonnie and Clyde became role models for younger generations.<sup>111</sup> The movie reflected a number of facets of popular culture and daily life in Yugoslavia, also. In the media there were advertisements for records with the hit song “Bonnie and Clyde,” and there were echoes in the work of various Yugoslav authors, while on Zagreb television singers dressed like Bonnie and Clyde performed musical numbers.<sup>112</sup>

This cult film from America also influenced fashion of the day. The outfits worn by Bonnie and Clyde were extremely popular, so much so that Fay Dunaway appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* and *Harper's Bazaar*.<sup>113</sup> In the wake of these American magazines, the Yugoslav *Bazar* also advocated styles inspired by this movie. Fashion creator Čedomir Čedomir offered women readers designs from the 1930s, as inspiration for “the latest fashion rage,”<sup>114</sup> there were print ads for berets like the one Bonnie wore, and models who were supposed to inspire viewers already fascinated by American gangsters were depicted on two illustrated pages in an article entitled “The Fashion of Bonnie and Clyde.”<sup>115</sup>

The popularity of American films, and young people's identification with the heroes of those films, frequently led to the “Western” question in the socialist society of Yugoslavia of the influence of movies on the violent behavior of youth. From the 1950s on, when U.S. films became dominant in Yugoslavia, there were many discussions of these movies' potentially negative effects. This began in 1951 with a case in which an eleven-year old killed a boy of the same age while imitating a scene involving revolver fire from the movie *The Oklahoma Kid*. After that people analyzed the growth in the number

<sup>111</sup> E. Laura, “Lepi i prokleti Boni i Klajd,” *Filmske sveske*, no. 2, February 1969, 97–100.

<sup>112</sup> V.S., “Boni i Klajd među nama,” *Politika*, June 13, 1968, 8.

<sup>113</sup> Maširević, *Film i nasilje*, 110.

<sup>114</sup> Č. Čedomir, “U potrazi za silom Boni i Klajd,” *Bazar*, March 20, 1968, 42.

<sup>115</sup> “Moda Boni i Klajd,” *Bazar*, April 27, 1968, 20–21.



of burglary cases, which were ascribed to the influence of the movie *The Asphalt Jungle*, and the growth in the number of falls from trees by people who had seen one of the movies about Tarzan. The most drastic example was the case of two minors who killed an adult in order to get the money to travel to Hollywood.<sup>116</sup>

There was discussion in ideological commissions and at Party gatherings about the possible influences that films could have. Higher Party organs generally relativized the question of whether American films were harmful for young people. At the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the League of Communists in 1956, Edvard Kardelj addressed this issue by coming to the defense of films, judging that the significance of both movies and cartoons as causes of youthful criminality were being exaggerated.<sup>117</sup> Voices defending film from the accusation that it called forth violence also found their way into the press, where it was mentioned that “it can be said that various Westerns and adventure movies do not always represent a danger to young people. Among Westerns there are also those that possess a certain esthetic and artistic value, such as *High Noon*, *Shane*, *Rio Bravo*.”<sup>118</sup> The upshot of all this is to show that from the Party itself came the view that film was not a bad influence on young people, as well as that it was “all right” for people to love film stars who were regular guests of both Yugoslavia and of Josip Broz Tito, and to have idols among them.

## Hollywood Stars in Yugoslavia

The change in Yugoslavia’s foreign policy orientation after 1948 provided the opportunity for cooperation with foreign film partners at the start of the 1950s; a period of intensive coproduction was thus begun with the West.<sup>119</sup> For this kind of cooperation, Yugoslavia possessed an array of advantages, connected above all with the geographic potential

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<sup>116</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 337.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 448.

<sup>118</sup> A. Todorović, “Sadržaj i poruka ‘crnih filmova,’” *NIN*, June 19, 1969, 10.

<sup>119</sup> For more on coproductions in the Yugoslav film industry, see Kosanović and Tucaković, *Stranci u raju*.

of the country—the sea, high mountains, plains, old cities for period pieces, and, in addition to all of that, an inexpensive labor force. Due to these advantages, we have, by the beginning of the 1980s, records of around 80 coproductions and as many as 270 other cooperative ventures with American and European partners.<sup>120</sup> In terms of just the United States, one of the most significant coproductions was the film *Valley of Peace* (1956), with the American actor John Kitzmiller.<sup>121</sup> In addition, this movie indicated a change in Yugoslavia's cinematic orientation, because in it a likable American pilot, Jim, emerges as an extremely positive hero who is protected from German soldiers by two war orphans.

The filming of coproductions meant that Yugoslavs were able to see in their own country some of the stars whom they had been admiring on the big screen or reading about in the press. In the 1960s, leading figures from the American world of actors and directors visited Yugoslavia. One of the great artists at issue here was Orson Welles, who was in his seventies. According to the recollections of the film director, Veljko Bulajić, Welles was an actor for whom Tito had special respect, because he was “the first important American from the world of artists and public figures who began writing a series of articles as early as 1942 about the treason of Draža Mihajlović.”<sup>122</sup> In February 1960, *Filmska kultura* reported on his stay in Zagreb because of his role in the movie *Austerlitz*, which was being made in the Zagreb studios of Dubrava Film.<sup>123</sup> Through this filming, Orson Welles discovered in Yugoslavia his own cinematic Mecca, and in 1962 he made *Process* (*The Trial*) in Croatia, and in 1964 he was part of a large team that coproduced *Marco Polo*.<sup>124</sup> In 1967 he made another visit to Yugoslavia, during which he made a film on the island of Hvar. The press, hungry for bizarre Hollywood tidbits, noted that the director and actor

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 110–11.

<sup>121</sup> *Dolina Miru* (*Valley of Peace*, 1956), dir. France Štiglic.

<sup>122</sup> “Tito, pozorište, film” (eds. Z. Filipović and D. Jovanović), *Teatron*, nos. 24–26 (1980): 148.

<sup>123</sup> R. Sremec, “Orson Welles među nama,” *Filmska kultura*, no. 15 (February 1960): 40–44.

<sup>124</sup> Kosanović and Tucaković, *Stranci u raju*, 125, 151–52.

drank thirty-five whiskeys every night, and that he ate nothing but steak, “for breakfast, lunch, and supper.”<sup>125</sup>

In the summer of 1960, the American actor Jack Palance came to Yugoslavia. He was familiar to the public for his role in the legendary Western *Shane*. On the plains of the Banat, he made, in collaboration with Lovćen Film, the American–Italian coproduction called *The Mongols*. In the press his visit was accompanied by stories of his life and his stormy divorce.<sup>126</sup>

The chill in relations with the United States between 1961 and 1963 brought a reduction in the number of trips by American stars to Yugoslavia, and it also brought a more negative attitude toward them, as in the case of Richard Widmark. This American actor, after visiting Yugoslavia and filming the coproduction film *The Long Ships*, made a lot of insulting comments about Belgrade, and the capital city’s media paid him back in kind: “he arrived simply as a businessman, as a ‘movie heavyweight’ whose only kind of interaction with Yugoslavs was from the superior position of a dollar-denominated movie lead looking down on accountants who only paid out dinars.”<sup>127</sup> There remains, nonetheless, the important fact that in this entire decade the only negative experience with an American star was this one with Widmark.

After this unpleasant episode from the period of “cooling” of relations, a “reconciliation” occurred; it also was reflected in the frequency of trips by American filmmakers and the Yugoslavs’ attitudes toward them. After the Fulbright agreement was signed in 1964,<sup>128</sup> famous American actors and directors made their way across Yugoslavia. Two-time Oscar winner Anthony Quinn made the film *Marco Polo* in Yugoslavia. The press took pains to reproduce a bit of Hollywood glamor with his visit, writing about “whispers of amazement spreading among

<sup>125</sup> S. Lazarević, “35 viskija Orsona Velsa,” *Ilustrovan politika*, November 21, 1967, 40; Kosanović and Tucaković, *Stranci u raju*, 127.

<sup>126</sup> Đ. Gajić, “Crni revolveraš u Beogradu,” *Ilustrovan politika*, August 23, 1960, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Z. Gluščević, “Šta hoće revolveraš Ričard Vidmark?” *NIN*, October 13, 1963, 12.

<sup>128</sup> For more on the Fulbright program in Yugoslavia, see R. Vučetić, “Amerikanizacija u jugoslovenskoj popularnoj kulturi ’60-ih,” Ph.D. diss., Belgrade, 2011, 170–77.

hotel guests when this tall, athletically built fifty-year-old appeared in the corridor or sitting rooms.”<sup>129</sup>

Alfred Hitchcock’s visit to Belgrade in May 1964 also elicited considerable interest from the media. The creator of cult films met with the prohibition of two of his movies as well as with welcome receptions and offers of future projects. The Commission for the Review of Films banned *The Rope* in 1963, “because of its harmful influence on the formation of young people.”<sup>130</sup> His movie *Torn Curtain* met with the same fate; the commission prevented its showing in Yugoslavia in 1969.<sup>131</sup> In this case, as in the majority of prohibitions, no justification was given, but the content of *Torn Curtain* points to possible reasons for the decision. This movie was a political thriller, a spy film, in which Paul Newman played an American physicist who was an expert in the manufacturing of rockets; at the start of the film he appears to have defected to East Germany. Eventually it is revealed that his flight was the only way he could win the trust of the scholarly community in East Germany in order to dig up information on the Soviet antibalistic program.<sup>132</sup> In addition to this sensitive Cold War theme, the film also contains Stasi agents, Soviet military deserters, a former Polish countess; thus the cryptic justification “No” in response to the application for permission to show this movie seems understandable from the Cold War perspective of the 1960s.

In 1964, Fred Zinnemann, the creator of cult classics such as *High Noon* and *From Here to Eternity*, spent his vacation on the Adriatic, and that same year the celebrated Oscar-winning director William Weiler visited Dubrovnik.<sup>133</sup> A month after his stay, the well-known American actor James Mason also toured Yugoslavia; he was in the Avala Film coproduction of *Genghis Khan*.<sup>134</sup>

One of the most significant visits by a Hollywood star in the 1960s was that of Kirk Douglas. He was on a goodwill mission to Yugo-

<sup>129</sup> S. Lazarević, “Surovi revolveraš u Metropolu,” *Ilustrovana politika*, January 21, 1964, 32.

<sup>130</sup> AJ, 147, F-20, 30.

<sup>131</sup> AJ, 147, F-1, 1-2.

<sup>132</sup> “Torn Curtain,” Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torn\\_Curtain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torn_Curtain).

<sup>133</sup> “Volim odrešene ruke,” *Politika*, August 7, 1964, 11.

<sup>134</sup> “Džems Mejns u Politici,” *Politika*, September 19, 1964, 5.

slavia in November 1964, and the fact that his trip was sponsored by the Bureau of Education and Culture of the State Department shows that he was participating in American cultural diplomacy.<sup>135</sup> Douglas set out on his mission as a cultural ambassador for America during President Kennedy's term and under the auspices of Kennedy's plan "People to People," the goal of which was "getting to know peoples from across the globe."<sup>136</sup> On the eve of his visit, Douglas communicated his wish to be received by the president of Yugoslavia, something that Tito, a diehard fan of Hollywood, granted, and people's satisfaction with the visit was increased even further by the assessment that "Douglas spoke about our country with feelings of great sympathy."<sup>137</sup> In the course of the visit, he held meetings with students and professors at the Academy of Dramatic Arts, he gave a guest performance at the Yugoslav Kinoteka, spent an evening with filmmakers, and held a press conference organized by USIA.<sup>138</sup> In January 1965, in a letter in which he expressed his gratitude to Tito for receiving him, asked the Yugoslav president to send him and his wife an autographed photo (a request by means of which the Hollywood star, who was used to giving out his autograph all over the world, let the Yugoslav president know that he considered him to be a star in his own right). What's more, when Douglas received the signed photo from Tito, he went so far as to tell him in another thank-you note that the "picture would remain permanently in his room and would thus be a permanent reminder of the wonderful visit to Yugoslavia and of the warmth and hospitality they had encountered there."<sup>139</sup>

Another interesting trip to Yugoslavia was that of Nicholas Ray, the director of the cult classic *Rebel Without a Cause*. He paid a visit to Zagreb because of a possible contract to make a Yugoslav film.<sup>140</sup> Because of Ray's ongoing problems with alcohol and narcotics, this project did not come to pass, but people's memories of that period

<sup>135</sup> AJ, KPR, 1-3-a, SAD, 1964-68, Kirk Daglas moli za prijem.

<sup>136</sup> "Kirk Daglas u Beogradu," *Politika*, November 5, 1964, 11.

<sup>137</sup> AJ, KPR, 1-3-a, SAD, 1964-1968, Poseta Kirk Daglasi.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> AJ, KPR, 1-3-a, SAD, 1964-68, Pisma Kirka Daglasi Titu, January 4 and March 30, 1965.

<sup>140</sup> "Nikola Rej režiraće za Avala-film," *Politika*, March 15, 1965, 9.

include his red Porsche that turned heads on the streets of the red country of self-managing socialism.<sup>141</sup> Ray's visit had, however, another dimension, because this particular director belonged to a group of American filmmakers that had often been on the receiving end of condemnation from official U.S. policy circles, because in their movies they presented an image of another, darker America. At the time of his visit, *Rebel Without a Cause*, although made in 1955, had still not been shown in Yugoslav cinemas, because it was on the list of films that USIA had prohibited American producers from exporting to Yugoslavia. The ban on "exports from the United States to certain other countries" was lifted a decade later, so that in 1965, the movies *From Here to Eternity*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *On the Waterfront* were shown in Yugoslavia for the first time. From newspaper reviews it is clear why films like these did not mesh with Hollywood propaganda for use abroad, because it wasn't the American dream that was on offer to filmgoers around the world. After the Belgrade premiere of *On the Waterfront*, a commentator noted: "America is usually not on view the way it is in this film. Murky, rainy, ominous, dirty. Filthy—both literally and, even more so, in terms of the morals of one of its worlds."<sup>142</sup>

America's view of its "black films" was, however, to some degree similar to the stance Yugoslavia had toward its Black Wave movies. The talented and courageous generation of directors that included John Houston, Elia Kazan, and Nicholas Ray in the United States and Živojin Pavlović, Dušan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrović, Puriša Đorđević and Želimir Žilnik in Yugoslavia had no desire to offer their audiences a picture of happy capitalist American society or a happy socialist Yugoslav one; therefore they each ran afoul of the authorities, who, regardless of their different ideological positions, tended to act and react in unison in certain situations.

The appearance of Burt Lancaster in Yugoslavia in 1968 was especially interesting, because it assumed the dimensions of a proper Hollywood scandal. This popular American actor was in Yugoslavia filming the coproduction *Castle Keep*. His visit caught the attention of the press at the time, and they wrote about him as a spoiled Hollywood star.

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<sup>141</sup> Kosanović and Tucaković, *Stranci u raju*, 153.

<sup>142</sup> M.Č., "Na dokovima Njujorka," *Politika*, August 23, 1965, 10.

A scandal in the Writers' Club in Belgrade attracted great attention; his angry wife "hit him over the top of his head with a carafe of wine" and then "he gave her a beating of the kind she would probably never forget."<sup>143</sup>

Glamour of Hollywood proportions also took place at the premiere of the Partisan spectacle entitled *The Battle on the Neretva*, attended by its main actors from abroad—Sergei Bondarchuk, Yul Brynner, Sylva Koscina, Hardy Krüger, Curd Jürgens, Franco Nero, Anthony Dawson, and Orson Welles.<sup>144</sup> It's interesting to note how the distribution of foreign actors' roles in this movie paralleled Yugoslavia's pro-Western policies: there were two Soviet actors, and two Americans, two Italians, and one British one.

Tito's fascination with Hollywood, with American films, and with spending time with filmmakers certainly "strengthened" the general fascination with stars, and it imparted a kind of legitimacy to "the people's love" of actors and actresses. Thus it was no accident that on the occasion of Tito's official visit to America in 1971, a meeting for the Yugoslav president was organized with leading Hollywood personalities such as Kirk Douglas, Charlton Heston, Rock Hudson, Shirley MacLaine, Karl Malden, and Lee Marvin.<sup>145</sup> It remains a matter of speculation whether Tito's fondness for movies, especially American ones, had something to do with the ability of his people to enjoy Hollywood productions and whether, as president of the country, he himself worshiped Hollywood stars.

## Cowboy with a Red Star

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and especially in socialist Yugoslavia after 1948 and during the thaw in relations with America, the Western was one of the favorite film genres for film audiences of all types. The

<sup>143</sup> S. Janićijević, "Skandal na holivudski način," *Politika*, May 10, 1968, 10.

<sup>144</sup> AJ, KPR, II-6-c, Beleška u vezi sa premijerom filma *Bitka na Neretvi* i susretom druga Predsednika i drugarice Broz sa protagonistima filma, November 27, 1969.

<sup>145</sup> T. Jakovina, "Tito i Nixon. Kako je pripreman i što je značio Titov posjet Washingtonu 1971?" in *Historijski zbornik* (Zagreb, 2002), 188–90.



most broadly applicable as well as the most precise definition of the “Western” is “any movie of action-based, adventurous, military character with a plot set in the Western areas of the United States,” and in which conflicts play out between the wilderness and civilization, settlers and Indians, and representatives of the law (sheriff, “noble gunslinger”) and men of violence (hired killers, outlaw, robber).<sup>146</sup> The basic props for a Western were a revolver, a lasso, a horse, a coach, a just-established town (with the obligatory saloon), a ghost town, a lone rider, a duel, constant protagonists (positive and negative characters), and an assortment of loyal companions (funny old man, an impulsive boy).<sup>147</sup> As a rule, the conflict would develop through clashes between antagonistic forces (good and evil), with the protagonist enveloped in the halo of a hero. These canonical characteristics of a “cowboy movie” left an imprint on various currents of Yugoslav film production as well, and therefore they are not, in the Yugoslav case, just Hollywood “poetics” but rather a part of the accepted and “realized” American influence on Yugoslav culture.

The sojourn of the Western in Yugoslavia, begun in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was resumed immediately after World War II, and by 1945 Belgraders could already view their first Western, which signaled the start of the great popularity of this genre in a country with a new ideology.<sup>148</sup> In the 1950s, the following films were among the ones people watched enthusiastically and in large numbers: *High Noon*, *Rio Grande*, *Shane*, *The Wild Wild West*, and *Cheyenne*. The expansion of the cowboy film and its acceptance by all social strata turned the Western in short order into a significant cultural fact, and by 1960 a translation of the book by Jean-Louis Rieuepeyrou and André Bazin on Westerns had been published. This situation differed significantly from that in countries behind the Iron Curtain, where Western standards such as John Ford’s *Stagecoach* were viewed exclusively through the prism of ideology. And in the Soviet Union, for instance, Ford’s masterpiece was described as “a saga of the struggle of the Indians against white imperialists, as it played out in the Wild West,” while *The Magnificent Seven*, which unleashed mass hysteria for Westerns

<sup>146</sup> More in Rjeperu and Bazen, *Vestern ili pravi američki film*, vol. 2, 677.

<sup>147</sup> “Vestern,” in *Filmska enciklopedija*, 677.

<sup>148</sup> Dević, “Strani film u beogradskim bioskopima,” 23–24.



from Odessa to Sverdlovsk, was soon pulled from the repertory.<sup>149</sup> According to Uta Poiger, in East Germany no American Western was shown until 1963; it was *The Magnificent Seven*.<sup>150</sup> In Poland, by contrast, the situation was considerably better, for all types of American movies, and Polish audiences were in a position to enjoy cult classics such as *Stagecoach*, *Rio Bravo*, and *The Last Train from Gun Hill*.<sup>151</sup>

Numerous sets of statistics, analyses of theater playlists, and movie reviews organized by distributors attest to the fact that the Western was truly the favorite film genre in Yugoslavia. Special attention was paid to the Western, and it was separated out from other cinematic works. For example, in Belgrade, between August 3 and 20, 1964, review showings of Westerns were held, and eighteen legendary works were screened.<sup>152</sup> The popularity of actors from cowboy movies increased steadily, so that in the 1960s their admirers founded fan clubs. That is how the John Wayne Club in Zagreb originated.<sup>153</sup> Further evidence of the popularity of the Western is the fact that in 1966 Zagreb Film, although not yet registered as an importer, purchased twenty American cowboy movies, over and above the customary quota that had already been agreed upon for the one official film importer, Jugoslavija Film.<sup>154</sup>

The magical attractiveness of Westerns could not be surmounted even by Josip Broz Tito, who let it be known through public statements that he loved Westerns and that his favorite actor was Gary Cooper.<sup>155</sup> Tito's expressions of adorations of Westerns and Gary Cooper most likely did not represent an attempt to make his personality traits public. Rather, it might have been a way to send a political message that the doors of Yugoslav cinemas were open to Westerns. Moreover, Tito's official visit to America in 1971 also had "Western dimension," for while he was relaxing in a villa in Los Angeles, he expressed to

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<sup>149</sup> Siefert, "From Cold War to Wary Peace: American Culture in the USSR and Russia," 196–97.

<sup>150</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 216.

<sup>151</sup> Antoszek and Delaney, "Poland: Transmissions and Translations," 225.

<sup>152</sup> *Politika*, August 1, 1964, 18.

<sup>153</sup> "Iz pisama naših čitalaca," *Filmski svet*, no. 504, August 17, 1964.

<sup>154</sup> AJ, 405, S-1, Zaključci doneti na 8. sednici Koordinacionog odbora za uovz filmova, November 21, 1966.

<sup>155</sup> Ž. Štaubringer, "Tito o filmu—filmski radnici o Titu," *OKO*, April 19–June 2, 1977, 14.

his hosts the wish to view a Western. To the chagrin of his hosts, not a single Western was playing in the vicinity, causing Tito to comment: "Hollywood, and not a single cowboy movie to be found!"<sup>156</sup>

Coproductions also contributed to the popularity of the genre with the Yugoslav public. This was especially the case with Germany; in Yugoslavia numerous Westerns were made from novels by Karl May, in which the heroes were the Indian chief Winnetou, as portrayed by the French actor Pierre Brice, and Old Shatterhand, as portrayed by the American actor Lex Barker. Karl May proved to be ideal for the East European market, because he was a German writer from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a time before the ideological conflicts, and his heroes such as Winnetou and Old Shatterhand were acceptable and "appropriate" for the communist market, because they fought against bad Indians and greedy white men.<sup>157</sup>

Thanks to the coproductions, Yugoslavia "exported" to East Germany the physical trainer from Belgrade, Gojko Mitić, who was the most famous Indian behind the Iron Curtain. This next great star of the German cinema began his career in 1961, working as a stunt man and double in coproductions that were being filmed in Yugoslavia; the small role that he received in the filming of one of Karl May's novels in a German production in 1963 opened the doors to the East German movie industry wide open for him. In the 1960s he made the films *Old Shatterhand*, *Winnetou II*, *Amongst Vultures*, *White Wolves*, *Trail of the Falcon*, and *Sons of the Great Bear*,<sup>158</sup> one of the quintessential "Easterns" or "Red Westerns,"<sup>159</sup> in which Indians were depicted as heroes and American soldiers as criminals. Thus, in this kind of movie, instead of typical situations from American Westerns in which John Wayne defeats the Indians on the prairies of the Wild West and then rides off, victorious, through the cactuses into the sunset, the "prairies" are in the Yugoslav mountains, the cowboys are Germans, the horses

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 40.

<sup>158</sup> For a complete filmography of Gojko Mitić, see <http://gojkomitic.de>.

<sup>159</sup> "Easterns," "Osterns" or "Red Westerns" were Westerns made in East European countries. "Communist Westerns" fall into this category, for instance *Limonade Joe* (Czechoslovakia, 1964) and *Sons of the Great Bear* (East Germany, 1966).

Russian, and it is an Indian, in the shape of Gojko Mitić, who emerges victorious from the conflict.<sup>160</sup> The film *Sons of the Great Bear* was only one of twelve movies produced by DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft) between 1965 and 1983. These were known as “Indianer-filme” and pitted Indians fighting against whites in the Wild West, with the latter portrayed as greedy conquerors and imperialists.<sup>161</sup> Acting in these movies based on novels by Karl May, Gojko Mitić made a career as the most famous Indian in the “Easterns” and remains, to this day, a big star, especially in the former East Germany, where fan clubs dedicated to him still exist.<sup>162</sup>

Westerns also had an impact on daily life in Yugoslavia, both on people’s behavior and on what they did in their free time. Under the Westerns’ influence, many people tried to imitate local sheriffs or heroes, and in those years children played cowboys and Indians along with Partisans and Germans.<sup>163</sup> The popularity of cowboys and Indians was driven not just by films but also by Western novels, and the clear favorite among the young reading public was the novel *Winnetou*, which was characterized in the *Borba*, the Party’s official organ, as “the official champion” of a survey about the most read books among youth.<sup>164</sup> By identifying with the heroes of Westerns, many ordinary people became local cowboys. Thus a worker in the harbor at Zadar, clad in a cowboy outfit he had gotten from the United States, walked around town playing sheriff.<sup>165</sup> And Ivana Lučić-Todosić notes that by the end of the 1950s, “sheriff” was already a type of street subculture and that boys who idolized Gary Cooper and Shane were becoming “urban street heroes.”<sup>166</sup>

The most popular local Western hero, however, was Harry Jackson, the “cowboy from Bijeljina.” This was actually Aljuš Musli, the owner of the camera shop named “Western” in that small Bosnian town. Changing his name to Harry Jackson, this film enthusiast

<sup>160</sup> Gemünden, “Between Karl May and Karl Marx,” 25.

<sup>161</sup> Gemünden, “Between Karl May and Karl Marx,” 25–26.

<sup>162</sup> See <http://www.gojkomitic.de> and [http://www.cinegraph.de/lexicon/Mitic\\_Gojko/biographie.html](http://www.cinegraph.de/lexicon/Mitic_Gojko/biographie.html).

<sup>163</sup> Ž. Aleksić, “Film i delikvencija mladih,” *Gledišta*, no. 1, 1960, 74.

<sup>164</sup> B. Jovanović, “Vinetu—najčitaniji,” *Borba*, January 8, 1963, 7.

<sup>165</sup> I. Bešević, “Šerif iz Zadra zavodi red,” *Ilustrovana politika*, January 8, 1963, 26.

<sup>166</sup> Lučić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do twista*, 104.

made ten short cowboy films, each lasting about thirty minutes; *Miris poljskog cveća* (*The Scent of Flowers in the Field*) is considered the best of these.<sup>167</sup> Out of love toward Westerns, Jackson also gave Westernized names to his daughters: Dženeta, Dženita, and Virdžinija.<sup>168</sup>

The Yugoslav film scene also produced a parody of the Western, *Zlatna pračka* (1967), in which a peasant from the Belgrade region meets cowboys from the Wild West.<sup>169</sup> In 1968, the idea of making a genuine domestic Western was bandied about. It was to be called *Two Sheriffs in Milton*.<sup>170</sup> Despite announcements in the press, no domestic Western appeared at that time, so apparently this film remained only at the stage of an idea. Although Italians, West Germans, and East Germans all filmed their Westerns on Yugoslav soil, and domestic film crews gained experience working with “cowboys,” the people making the decisions in the Yugoslav film industry wisely held off making Yugo-Westerns, for they were surely aware of the fact that such a creation would be in no position to compete with the American films. They even more wisely began incorporating Western iconography into Yugoslav Partisan movies, doing so in a manner far more sophisticated than simple imitation.

It is in connection with the opus of the director Živorad Žika Mitrović (1921–2005) that the Western as a genre left its deepest imprint on Yugoslav filmmakers.<sup>171</sup> The biography of this important Yugoslav filmmaker shows an openness to American popular culture dating back to the interwar period, to his youth, when he, as a high school student, drew cartoons and spent his scholarship money viewing every film that

<sup>167</sup> This film by Harry Jackson should not be confused with the 1977 film by Srđan Karanović of the same name.

<sup>168</sup> E. Nišić Soko, “Kauboži danas loše prolaze,” <http://emirnisic.blogger.ba/arhiva/2008/01/30/1355619>.

<sup>169</sup> *Zlatna pračka* (1967), dir. R. Lola Đukić.

<sup>170</sup> J.A., “Vestern na jugoslovenski način,” *Filmski svet*, no. 693, April 11, 1968, 7.

<sup>171</sup> Mitrović’s filmography includes: *Ešalon doktora M.* (1955), *Poslednji kolosijek* (1956), *Potraži Vandu Kos* (1957), *Miss Stone* (1958), *Kapetan Leši* (1960), *Signali nad gradom* (1960), *Solunski atentatori* (1961), *Obracun* (1962), *Nevesinjska puska* (1963), *Marš na Drinu* (1964), *Gorke trave* (1965), *Do pobede i dalje* (1966), *Nož* (1967), *Operacija Beograd* (1968), *Brat doktora Homera* (1968), *Ubistvo na podmukao i svirep načn iz niskih pobuda* (1969), *Užička republika* (1974), *Savamala* (1982), *Timočka buna* (1983), *Protestni album* (1986).

came to Belgrade, paying for tutoring in English so he would better understand American movies, and buying movie magazines.<sup>172</sup>

Mitrović's first feature film, *Ešalon doktora M.* (1955), was the first Yugoslav movie modeled after, and made under the direct influence of, the American Western. The story of this movie is set in Kosovo (as are his later films *Kapetan Leši*, *Obračun*, and *Brat doktora Homera*), where Ballists<sup>173</sup> are fighting against the National Liberation Army and attack a group of wounded people whom Doktor M. is leading to the nearest city. Using patterns from the Western genre, Mitrović began with this movie to create a new poetics of the Yugoslav, or, more precisely, the Partisan Western.<sup>174</sup>

In *Ešalon doktora M.*, viewers could see, for the first time in the history of Yugoslav cinema, scenes on a massive scale and many elements of "cowboy" dramaturgy: violent confrontations, horses galloping through ravines, and racing carriages as in John Ford's cowboy movies.<sup>175</sup> When this movie made its appearance in cinemas, the press also began for the first time to take up the issue of "the Yugoslav Western." The plot of the film, as noted, "plays out in wild but unusually photogenic areas of the type we are used to seeing in American Westerns, and many of the scenes, which are full of action, are shot in such a vigorous and convincing way that comparisons with Westerns present themselves automatically."<sup>176</sup> With this movie, Mitrović succeeded in "replacing the tired, pathetic Partisan epic with a lively and attractive action-filled spectacle," which he continued doing later in the films *Kapetan Leši* (*Captain Leshi*), *Signali nad gradom* (*Signals above the City*), *Obračun* (*The Showdown*), *Operacija Beograd* (*Operation Belgrade*), and *Brat doktora Homera* (*Dr. Homer's Brother*).<sup>177</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Interview of Vladimir Crnjanski with Žika Mitrović, [www.novikadrovi.net/razno/3-razno.php](http://www.novikadrovi.net/razno/3-razno.php).

<sup>173</sup> Ballists were Albanian nationalist, anti-communist organizations, established in 1942 that fought in Albania, Kosovo, Makedonija, Sandžak, and Montenegro. In Yugoslavia they had heavy fights with partisans, even after war had ended.

<sup>174</sup> M. Boglić, "Spektakularna historičnost Žike Mitrovića," *Filmska kultura*, nos. 48–49, 1966, 128–29.

<sup>175</sup> Čolić, *jugoslovenski ratni film*, vol. 2, 544.

<sup>176</sup> "Umetnički lik Žike Mitrovića," *Filmski svet*, November 23, 1961, 4.

<sup>177</sup> R. Munitić, "Ešalon kapetana Žike," *TV novosti*, February 7, 1996.

The poetics of the Western genre were developed, even more than in *Convoy*, in *Kapetan Leši*, in which Captain Ramiz Leši has the assignment of liquidating the remaining Ballist forces in Kosovo. One of the most frequently borrowed iconographic elements of the Western in Mitrović's films, and in this film in particular, is linked to the exterior shots, which are almost identical with outside shots from American Westerns; thus Captain Leši, the Partisans, and the Ballists ride on horses through canyons and gulches, attack one another from behind boulders, and gallop through landscapes identical to the prairies in the Wild West. The scenes filmed in taverns were also taken from American Westerns (the café in *Kapetan Leši* is similar to the saloon in *Rio Bravo*), in concordance with the theory of the Western that calls for films of this genre to evince frequently "the tradition of gun-play (duels with pistols) and the tradition of the saloon full of smoke and racket."<sup>178</sup>

The character of Captain Leši is also one which, following Western models, turns into a legend—he is a fighter for "a just cause," and when he is involved in conflicts, he emerges both as the victor and the undoubted authority. With the creation of a certain type of hero, played in the films of Žika Mitrović by the actor Aleksandar Gavrić,<sup>179</sup> the Yugoslav film industry practically adopted yet another Hollywood business element, and one film critic wondered if we were on the way to creating "our own kind of sheriff, or Gary Cooper."<sup>180</sup> Because his roles in Mitrović's movies brought him a lot of fame, Aleksandar Gavrić attained the status of one of Yugoslavia's first film stars, additional proof of which is the fact that he was the first Yugoslav actor to appear on the cover of the magazine *Filmski svet*, heretofore "reserved" only for stars from the West.

The sun, dust, and sweat dominate *Kapetan Leši*, which makes the slopes of the Prokletije Mountains, the valley of the Drim River, and the town of Đavolja Varoš, where it was filmed, greatly resemble

<sup>178</sup> Rjeperu and Bazen, *Vestern ili pravi američki film*, 71.

<sup>179</sup> Aleksandar Gavrić (1932–72) played in the following movies made by Mitrović: *Kapetan Leši* (1960), *Signali nad gradom* (1960), *Solunski atentatori* (1961), *Obračun* (1962), *Nevesinjska puška* (1963), *Marš na Drinu* (1964), *Operacija Beograd* (1968), and *Ubistvo na podmukao i svirep način iz niskih pobuda* (1969).

<sup>180</sup> Čolić, *jugoslovenski ratni film*, vol. 2, 559.

the setting of American Westerns. If the officer Ramiz Leši had on a cowboy outfit instead of the military uniform of the Partisans, and if the Ballists, instead of wearing traditional Albanian folk costumes, were dressed as Indians, the film would be no different from the Westerners made by Americans or Italians.

The critics' reaction to the appearance of Partisan Westerns, and of action films from World War II in general, is a good indication of how the government was consciously making use of the most famous American film genre to promote its own ideals. Almost all of the newspapers wrote positively about *Kapetan Leši*, praising the decision of the filmmakers to take an American movie as their model. The Croatian critic Hrvoje Lisinski was one of the few who gave a negative review; he complained that Mitrović "was trying to make a 'Yugoslav Western' . . . and that is absolutely impossible, just as any other kind of Western besides the American is complete nonsense." He also said that Mitrović "was trying to transplant something that could not flourish in our country, in the same way that a lemon tree won't flourish in Siberia."<sup>181</sup>

Of course it is not far from the truth to say that the Partisan Western could end up like a "lemon tree in Siberia," but on many levels this suited the regime, which would soon be confronted with other views of the war and revolution in the creations of the Black Wave. Partisans stories were now told in the form of a Western, with the heroes having haloes like uncorrupted heroes. Such "imported" poetics with local themes had a pedagogical role, as film magazines of the day reported. It would guide children toward playing Partisans and Ballists instead of the traditional cowboys and Indians, and it was also thought that films like *Kapetan Leši* would lead young people to share the ideals represented by the captain rather than those of Tarzan.<sup>182</sup> The fact that Yugoslav Partisan movies up to that point had not met with great sympathy among young people also contributed to a kind of rapid fire "cowboy-ization" of the Partisans.

To better understand the appearance of the Partisan action movie, one should bear in mind that over one-third of films made in Yugo-

<sup>181</sup> H. Lisinski, "Kapetan Leši. Jugoslovenski vestern," *Filmska kultura* 4, no. 19, October 1960, 79.

<sup>182</sup> S. Novaković, "Quo vadis, Žiko Mitroviću?," *Filmska kultura* 7, no. 32, February 1963, 53.



slavia were dedicated to the National Liberation Struggle (NLS), while between 1960 and 1969 eighty-one films were produced on Partisan or revolutionary themes.<sup>183</sup> From the very first creative work dealing with the NLS, the 1947 movie *Slavica*, Partisan movies took various forms: psychological dramas, epic spectacles, comedies, thrillers, and then, unavoidably, along came the action movie.<sup>184</sup> Over time, however, they crystallized into two genres that, apparently, enjoyed the greatest favor among the public—the action/Western Partisan movie and Partisan spectacles.

*Kapetan Leši*, *Signalni nad gradom*, *Kota 905*, and *X-25* were made after 1960, and it is then that the classic commercialization of the Partisan film began; along with them another of the trademarks of the West (market and profit) came via the film industry and its Americanization to be reality in a socialist country also. The Council on Cinematography considered it to be a positive thing that the makers of such movies were able “to find a very appropriate form of presenting the NLS, especially with regard to young people. These films garnered a record number of viewers and, just as importantly, *Kapetan Leši* came to enjoy great popularity, becoming, little by little, the Yugoslav Flash Gordon or Tom Mix.”<sup>185</sup>

Such a declaration by the Council on Cinematography, that is by a state body, shows that the regime had accepted the fact that the content and messages that people in socialism should adopt could be wrapped in American packaging, in forms that were unique to capitalism. And the regime did not limit itself to Partisan Westerns, for, soon, owing to the quite positive results in the cinematic sphere, Yugoslav musicians also started to make songs about Tito and about work projects, such as “To the Tracks, to the Tracks,” with a rock and roll beat, and the “Partisan comic” also made its appearance in Yugoslavia.

International influences on Yugoslav films were not limited to American ones, but they were not evaluated in the same manner. In the case of Partisan Westerns, the American influence was completely to the regime’s liking, because in a very palatable American form they

<sup>183</sup> A complete Partisan filmography can be found in R. Munitić, “Jugoslaven-ski film o revoluciji,” *Filmska kultura* 13, nos. 66–67, July 20, 1969, 43–48.

<sup>184</sup> Munitić, “Jugoslaven-ski film o revoluciji,” 4, 27.

<sup>185</sup> AJ, 405, S-28, Oto Deneš, *Naše filmske veze s inostranstvom*.



placed desired Yugoslav political and ideological content. The influence of French, Italian, and Swedish film was not, however, looked upon so favorably, especially when, under their influence, films began to be produced in Yugoslavia that rendered in dark colors the images of life in a socialist society.

Black film is the general designation for films that, in an openly critical way, depict currents of life that according to prevailing understandings are negative, and therefore their depiction is usually considered undesirable (e.g., miserable social conditions, accidents, violence, and psychological splits in personality)<sup>186</sup> Although the first such films, critically reexamining Yugoslav reality, appeared in 1961, discussions of new trends in Yugoslav film first started to become more frequent after 1963. In June of that year, at a meeting of the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, the direct question of “the serious ideological deficiencies and artistic failure of several of the most recent movies” was taken up for the first time.<sup>187</sup> It was stated there that the interest of film makers should be, above all, socially engaged film, and the auteurs of the Black Wave got their comeuppance for “completely equating social engagement with the depiction and exploration of real, existing—or nonexistent—suppressed parts of our reality.”<sup>188</sup>

This discussion continued at the federal level, and at a meeting with a group of “Communist film makers,” held by the Commission for Ideological Work of the CC of the LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) on December 14, 1963, several films were reviewed that were “problematic in terms of their ideological content” (*Grad* [The City], *Povratak* [Return], *Čovek iz hrastove sume* [The Man from the Oak Forest], and the documentaries *Kafana* [The Tavern], *Zadušnice* [Requiems], *Parada* [The Parade], and *Resni čovek* [A Serious Man]).<sup>189</sup>

<sup>186</sup> “Crni film,” *Filmska enciklopedija*, vol. 1, 235.

<sup>187</sup> “Informacija o sastanku aktiva komunista filmskih radnika, održanom 4. juna 1963,” Ideološka komisija CK SK Srbije, citing Prema: A. Petrović, *Novi film 1950–1965*, vol. I (Belgrade, 1971), 128.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>189</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b-179, Informacija o sastanku sa grupom filmskih radnika komunista održanom u Komisiji za ideološki rad CK SKJ, December 14, 1963.

It is no coincidence that discussion of the “ideological problems of domestic film” began in 1963. That year was representative of numerous interventions in culture, at Party plenums, and in consultations on the theme of “decadence in creative work.” And the year started with a characteristic New Year’s greetings from the president of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, in which he underscored that

the conditions in our culture and moral-political life are not as we would wish them to be, and they do not meet the needs of our socialist community. Especially in literature, and in the arts in general, there is much that is alien, and incompatible with our socialist label, much that is attempting to divert the course of our development in a direction different from that determined by our revolution. There are various decadent manifestations that have been brought in from outside. We must fight against these, using political work and not just administrative means.<sup>190</sup>

Not long after this message, Tito attacked certain phenomena in the cultural life of the country. At that point he made mention of “sterile intellectuals” who, “particularly in literature, painting, and film, among others, float somewhere outside our socialist reality and are, for the most part, bearers of negative influence from abroad. . . . They are filled with enthusiasm for decadent foreign art and literature.”<sup>191</sup>

One should recall that this view of the cultural situation was a reaction to diplomatic developments. These were years of tension in the relationship with America (1961–63) and of yet another of the ever more frequent turns to the Soviet Union; therefore it is not surprising that this talk is obviously inspired by Khrushchev’s speech on art in December 1962, in which the Kremlin leader employed extremely pejorative language to describe abstract art and jazz. It is also necessary to bear in mind that it was in December 1962 that a state delegation from Yugoslavia, headed by Tito, visited the USSR; that points of Tito’s speech were borrowed from Khrushchev thus appears even clearer.

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<sup>190</sup> “Novogodišnja poruka predsednika Tito,” *Borba*, January 1 and 2, 1963, 1.

<sup>191</sup> “U Beogradu počeo sedmi kongres narodne omladine Jugoslavije,” *Borba*, January 24, 1963, 1–2.

The film *Grad* was the first victim of these ideological changes brought about by the altered foreign policy; it was the only officially banned movie in the socialist Yugoslavia. On July 13, 1963, the district court in Sarajevo issued a verdict according to which “the showing of the above-mentioned film is prohibited without exception.”<sup>192</sup> Ideological commissions responded to the appearance of “the new films” with numerous analyses and conclusions that there was in Yugoslav film “the increasingly pronounced tendency to ideological and esthetic roaming,” and also that concepts are elaborated in the movies that are “in opposition to our socialist social practices and reality. These are, first and foremost, concepts that contain and affirm an understanding of life as absurdity, of life dominated by evil or boredom or the inactivity of people who should be changing the world for the better—that is to say, they affirm doubt in humanity, etc.” The movie *Čovek iz hrastove šume* came in for special criticism because it was held to be nationalist and anticommunist.<sup>193</sup>

Real problems for the government originated when the film *Dani* by Aleksandar Petrović, followed by films from Boštjan Hladnik, Dušan Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović, Mića Popović, Puriša Đorđević, Želimir Žilnik, and others, began to encroach on ideological taboos, were considered inviolable and untouchable. And when after 1967 black film started to gain recognition in the outside world, “alarm and panic broke out.”<sup>194</sup> Pressure continued to be applied, and an attempt to ban Žilnik’s film *Rani radovi* (*Early Works*) ensued; by June 19, 1969, a Belgrade district prosecutor had signed an order for a temporary ban on public showings “due to grave offenses against social and political morality.” The final result, however, was different than in the case of the film *Grad*. *Rani radovi* was exonerated by the court and permitted to be shown in public.<sup>195</sup>

Full-blown production of Partisan action movies, on the one hand, and prohibitions and pressures on Black Wave films, on the other

<sup>192</sup> Tirnanić, *Crni talas*, 38–39.

<sup>193</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b-179, Informacija o sastanku sa grupom filmskih radnika komunista održanom u Komisiji za ideološki rad CK SKJ, December 14, 1963.

<sup>194</sup> Nikodijević, *Zabranjeni bez zabrane*, 7.

<sup>195</sup> Tirnanić, *Crni talas*, 70–77.

hand, demonstrates the firm and clear stance of the government in defending its ideological positions by emphasizing support for compatible creative works and by putting up obstacles to those considered unsuitable. It is no accident that definite favoritism was shown to Partisan Westerns and Partisan spectacles with international stars in the 1960s, for this was precisely the period in which, as part of the Black Wave, other works on war and the Partisans were being made that assailed the existing myths of the national liberation struggle and revolution (*Čovek iz hrastove šume*, *Izdajnik* [Traitor], *Delije* [Heroes], *Pohod* [The Trek], *Žutro*, *Zaseda* [The Ambush]).<sup>196</sup>

In analyses of the Black Wave, and also in its comparisons to “desirable” Partisan films, the most praiseworthy movie was *Zaseda* (1969). This work by Živojin Pavlović was the most obvious example of sharp criticism of contemporary society and examination of the results of the course of the revolution, and it was also an example of a work of art which was diametrically opposed to “desirable films” on war themes, such as Partisan Westerns or Partisan spectacles like *Bitka na Neretvi*.

In *Zaseda*, almost the entire official stance on the revolution was negated, and this was accompanied by a striking contestation of inviolable Partisan history. The gist of the plot is a revolution betrayed, and a series of scenes, such as those in which food is brutally confiscated from peasants, leaves a doleful impression on the events of 1944 and 1945, which heretofore had been idealized and ideologized in Hollywood fashion. The very end of the film intensifies even more the dark picture of the establishment of the new government when Ivo, the hero of the betrayed revolution, although he himself is guiltless, is mowed down by bullets of arrogant operatives of OZNA, the secret police, with the sentence: “Fucking peasants! You call this a revolution?” Until *Zaseda*, in films with Partisans and revolutionaries, bullets in the conclusion of movies struck negative characters, but in this movie, in the final showdown, the positive character, who sincerely believes in the revolution, dies. This movie portrays the revolution eating its own children, and even more so it shows that the effects of the revolution

<sup>196</sup> *Izdajnik* (1964), dir. Kokan Rakonjac; *Delije* (1968), dir. Mića Popović; *Pohod* (1968); dir. Đorđe Kadijević; *Zaseda* (1969), dir. Živojin Pavlović.

were in complete contradiction to its initial ideals. In a realism that was far from laughter and inspiration, and by dint of these new auteurs, people no longer looked at either contemporary realities nor at the Partisan past only with rose-colored Hollywood glasses.

It was paradoxical that *Zaseda*, which was arguably the most political and most critical movie of all those made in Yugoslavia in the 1960s, was not prohibited, although it was pulled out of cinemas, testifying to the fact that the decisions of the film censors were not always consistent or clear.

Furthermore, Pavlović received, for his movie *Zaseda*, the director's certificate and the critics' prize at the Pula Festival in 1970, making these yet another of the many contradictory aspects of Yugoslav society.

The position that foreign policy advantage could be derived from ideological damage in the domestic sphere was characteristic of the Yugoslav regime after 1948, primarily in terms of its relations with America, and it was arguably in connection with films of the Black Wave that it reached its clearest expression. These films and filmmakers, who were attacked sharply in ideological commissions and individual media, were the recipients of state prizes, and in addition the government continually sent them abroad to represent the country at film festivals. The key determinants in selecting who would go to which festival were foreign policy interests, and usually the ones that were "inappropriate" inside Yugoslavia would travel to the West, while the "appropriate" ones mostly went to the East, which typically meant to the USSR. The appearance of "inappropriate" films in the West sent the message to the outside world that, for the Yugoslav government, the conflicts with these directors was only about film and not about politics. There were real conditions, well-known to the West, that made this kind of message possible: in socialist countries, when someone was criticized by the government, even in cases where people were criticized much more mildly than the directors of the Black Wave, they could very easily be deprived of their passports and be allowed to cross the borders of their country only as a political emigrant. Therefore, while "black" and anti-Partisan films were sent to festivals in the West, it was almost exclusively Partisan films that went eastward, bearing the message to the East that Yugoslavia was protecting and caring for the revolution and its traditions. Thus,

for instance, at the festival in Moscow, there were regular showings of films with Partisan or similar themes.<sup>197</sup>

The situation with “new film” and Black Wave and their participation in international festivals did not, however, remain the same throughout the entire decade of the 1960s. Yet it did trend in a positive direction. At first, when “new film” was condemned, its directors and their creations were not considered desirable representatives of the country abroad. Thus in 1963, the Association of Film Producers of Serbia decided that Aleksandar Petrović’s film *Dani* (*Days*) would not be allowed to be shown at international film festivals.<sup>198</sup>

In the second half of the 1960s, the situation began to change in obvious ways, especially with the dispatch of Black Wave films to America. The movie *Tri* (*Three*) by Aleksandar Petrović was shown in 1966 at a film festival in New York, and the next year the following films were also screened in New York: *Čovek nije tica* (*Man Is Not a Bird*, shown in the Museum of Modern Art), *Tri* (in a theater), and *Ljubavni slučaj* (*Love Affair*, shown at a film festival). In 1968 the Yugoslav candidate for the Oscars, *Skupljači perja* (*I Even Met Happy Gypsies*) made it to American cinemas.<sup>199</sup> The state selected directors from the controversial Black Wave to represent the country in a special two week-long festival of Yugoslav film at the Museum of Modern Art in New York,<sup>200</sup> and a Week of Yugoslav Film was held in 1969 at the same museum.<sup>201</sup> Even during preparations for the dispatch of

<sup>197</sup> The festival in Moscow was biennial and, in the period from 1959 to 1969, the following films from Yugoslavia were shown: *Kroz granje nebo* (dir. Stole Janković), *Nebeski odred* (dirs. B. Bošković and I. Nikolić), *Kozara* (dir. V. Bulajić), *Prometej sa otoka Viševice* (dir. V. Mimica), *Štićenik* (dir. V. Slijepcević), and *Kad čuješ zvona* (dir. A. Vrdoljak). With the exception of the last film, all of these were on Partisan themes. For more information on this, see AJ, 559, F-318, 1964, Izveštaj o kulturno-prosvetnoj i naučnoj saradnji sa SSSR, and also “Moscow International Film Festival,” <http://www.moscowfilmfestival.ru/miff33/eng/archives/>.

<sup>198</sup> Nikodijević, *Zabranjeni bez zabrane*, 54.

<sup>199</sup> DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1968, F-174, 417008, Pregled jugoslovenskih nastupa u SAD; AJ, 559-526.

<sup>200</sup> AJ, 559, F-526, 1968, Kulturna saradnja (SAD).

<sup>201</sup> At that time Dušan Makavejev, Želimir Žilnik, and Boro Drašković were in New York.

the films in 1969, there were discussions that the films to be selected should be “of a caliber appropriate for such a showing.”<sup>202</sup> Since the most important works of the Black Wave were among the films chosen, it is obvious that the regime itself was aware of the quality or “caliber” of these films and conscious of the fact that only the greatest artistic achievements would represent Yugoslavia well in the West.

During their time in New York, the Yugoslav directors had the opportunity to chat with American students. These conversations worked in favor of the regime. For example Dušan Makavejev, a critic of Yugoslav society in his films, was less critical of the reality in his country when he stated: “In Yugoslavia every citizen can get a passport and travel wherever he wishes. We have 20 million inhabitants and art is free there. . . . The government does not support the creation of movies directly, but it does it through foundations, thereby giving us the possibility of working completely independently.”<sup>203</sup>

Even the recipient of one of the main state prizes, Krsto Škanata, who had been criticized by the ideological commissions, demonstrated his loyalty to the state in an announcement that he gave after his return from New York, where his films had been screened: “Everyone envies us our freedom. They say that in their countries in the West no one would agree to finance films that talk about people and life in this way, with such openness. And that if they did find someone to finance them, such movies would not receive approval for viewing.”<sup>204</sup>

Such paradoxes open up the complicated questions of whether the regime was using artists or artists were using the regime and of what was the true state of freedom for the arts in Yugoslavia. A partial answer to these questions was given by Dušan Makavejev, who remarked that “a socialist society was created like a big family, where everyone controls everything.”<sup>205</sup> This was not about just control, but mutual pragmatism. On the one hand, the government of the “big family” could relax when it was to its advantage to do so; on the other

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<sup>202</sup> AJ, 559, F-589, 642-14/69-3, 1969, Filmska saradnja sa Jugoslavijom.

<sup>203</sup> Dž. Jelkat, “Susret jugoslovenskih reditelja i americkih studenata,” *Sineast*, no. 10, 1969, 10.

<sup>204</sup> “Sa cenzurom—bez cenzure,” *Filmski svet*, no. 685, February 15, 1968, 5–6.

<sup>205</sup> Nikodijević, *Zabranjeni bez zabrane*, 33.



hand, there were the artists who knew how to behave as part of that “big family” even when they found themselves holding views diametrically opposed to those of the system. The upshot of this was that “everyone controls everything,” but it was also true that everybody could do everything. For how else could one explain the way directors made films that were deeply critical of socialist realities and sharply criticized by the government—and then received the highest awards of the state and represented the country at the most important international festivals at which some of these directors, even the most controversial of them, would praise their attackers?

The apparent contradictions between state authority and Black Wave are also visible in the relationship that Tito, even if only at the formal level, had to Black Wave films. Namely, the Yugoslav president was the patron of the festival in Pula, and it was rumored that not a single film made it onto the festival’s playlist unless he had viewed and approved it. Therefore, we might note, it sounds odd that the film *Ћutro* received the silver arena (the award in the shape of the ancient Roman amphitheater at Pula),<sup>206</sup> and that its director received two golden arenas (for sets and for directing) at the same festival, and that in that same year, 1967, some of the best films of the decade were shown—*Buđenje pacova* (*The Rats Woke Up*), *Skupljači perja*, *Ljubavni slučaj*, *Praznik* (*Holiday*), *Breza* (*The Birch Tree*), and *Kaja, ubit ću te* (*Kaja, I Am Going to Kill You*).<sup>207</sup> Still, in order to maintain the balance between praise and criticism of movies shown there, a polemic about *Ћutro*, occasioned by its indictment by SUBNOR, which viewed it as undermining Partisan traditions, lasted from November 5 to 22, 1967, in *Borba*.

There is evidence, however, of a certain degree of democracy in the system, such as the large number of texts in this polemic that defended the work of the film’s director Puriša Đorđević. Significantly, Veljko Vlahović also participated in this polemic; he was a member of the presidency of the CC LCY, and he counted as the éminence grise of socialist Yugoslavia’s cultural life. In response to condemnations that the movie negated the revolution, he declared that “it is not pos-

<sup>206</sup> *Ћutro* (1967), dir. Puriša Đorđević.

<sup>207</sup> Tirnanić, *Crni talas*, 49.



sible to permit creativity itself to be put in the dock, not even in the name of revolution.”<sup>208</sup>

On account of views such as these from the highest levels of the Party, and because of the opportunity for polemics, it did seem that everything, or a great deal of things, was possible. According to Makavejev, if one were to analyze the Yugoslavia of the 1960s on the basis of the films that were produced in that decade (the nature of the life they depicted, what themes they dealt with), “I think that you’d discover that it was a fairly modern country, and ahead of countries like Switzerland, which lives through other cultures, or Germany, which says little about itself in its art.”<sup>209</sup> Apparently the 1960s formed the apex of Yugoslav film. The only film to be banned was *Grad*, and the directors of the Black Wave were criticized in the work of critics and they were challenged by ideological commissions, but this occurred with no grave consequences either for them or for the film industry.

The 1970s turned out to be a completely different matter. The film *W.R.-Misterije organizma* (*W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*) by Makavejev, experienced an administrative banning in 1971; and in 1972 *Plastični Isus* (*Plastic Jesus*) was prohibited and its director, Lazar Stojanović, was arrested and spent three years in prison. At this point, the directors of the Black Wave films began to receive different treatment. Makavejev was thrown out of the Party, and he left Yugoslavia and continued his work in America and France. Aleksandar Petrović, who was not a member of the Party, was fired from the Academy of Film, Theater, Radio, and Television.<sup>210</sup> Žilnik also left Yugoslavia, and Živojin Pavlović lost his position as professor of dramaturgy. All of these changes, along with the sudden narrowing of artistic freedoms, correspond to the great turbulence in Yugoslav society of the 1970s. These were the years of the *maspok* (mass movement) in Croatia, the fall of the liberals in Serbia, after which ten student leaders from 1968 were arrested, and the promulgation of the new constitution of 1974, the sacking of professors from Belgrade University in 1975, the cessation of publication of the journal *Praxis*, the cancelation of the Korčula Summer School, and so on. Political bans, persecutions, and arrests at

<sup>208</sup> “Nedostaje kultura kritike,” *Borba*, November 20, 1967, 2.

<sup>209</sup> Nikodijević, *Zabranjeni bez zabrane*, 48.

<sup>210</sup> Goulding, *Jugoslavensko filmsko iskustvo*, 82.

the time characterized the start of new political climate in the country, which Pavle Levi sees as the reestablishment of a local version of the Bolshevik hard line (which had been gradually abandoned since the mid-1950s), based on centralized control of power, a monolithic Party, and the authoritarianism of leadership at the highest level.<sup>211</sup>

In the phenomenon of the Black Wave there is not, of course, any direct reaction to Yugoslav-American relations or any traces of Americanization. When considering the whole of the Yugoslav film industry it is a unique paradox. In cinematic creations that are critical of Yugoslavia and its communist ideology, for example, there exists no visible American influence, but, on the other hand, in many Partisan films, produced in order to glorify Yugoslav communist ideology, American evidence is patent. The Black Wave is, nonetheless, when examining the breadth and complexity of Yugoslav-American relations, important as a kind of counterpoint to that which both suited the Yugoslav authorities and comprised the essence of Hollywood—allowing a dream factory to take people out of their small, often gray worlds and lead them into luxurious and glitzy lives. Therefore, the Black Wave was not merely a critique of communist ideology, but it was also, indirectly, by using cinematic language and methods that were diametrically opposed to Hollywood standards, in a position to criticize everything that embellished reality. At the level of subject matter, the Black Wave attacked communist illusions, while at the level of esthetics it attacked American, or more specifically Hollywood, illusions. Certainly the Yugoslav authorities had more need of Hollywood splendor.

In the glorifying American reality, the reality of an ideological adversary, there was, obviously, less danger than in criticizing Yugoslav reality. That is why American films, American stars in Yugoslavia, the Americanization of domestic Partisan films, and the identification with American stars were more acceptable to the regime than what examples of the Black Wave brought to the table—that society was in a deep crisis, that the revolution had in many ways been betrayed, and that the reality of socialism was fairly grim.

The 1960s were, in some ways, years in which nearly everything was possible, years when irreconcilable phenomena bumped up against

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<sup>211</sup> Levi, *Raspad Jugoslavije na filmu*, 84–85.

each other and were reconciled; this is strikingly visible in the domain of film. In Yugoslav theaters, along with the big hits full of Hollywood glamor and the masterpieces of Western films, distinctly Cold War films were also shown, films that at bottom were anticommunist; major coproductions were carried out, enabling the visit of Hollywood stars and demonstrating Yugoslavia's openness and bringing with them economic gain; Partisan Westerns and Partisan spectacles were also filmed, along with movies that took a dim view of the war and revolution.

Along with Italian neorealism and the French New Wave, Yugoslavia in the 1960s offered the world a new cinematic direction, the Black Wave, permitting the country to become a force to be reckoned with in the film world. The works of Živojin Pavlović, Aleksandar Petrović, Dušan Makavejev, and Želimir Žilnik were crowned with the greatest international laurels, and these directors and their creations came to be of interest to all the leading film critics and theoreticians of the day. From a "red" country, with red passports, they reached the red carpets of the leading film festivals—with their black movies. For domestic consumption, they were criticized at home, and that criticism was probably genuine in ideological terms, but foreign policy considerations made it possible for them to travel freely in the outside world, even if this was permitted a little grudgingly. The forcefully swinging pendulum in the day-to-day existence of the Yugoslav cinematic film life in the 1960s (from the rose-colored world of Hollywood films to Yugoslavia's Black Wave) demonstrates that it was not possible to achieve a more balanced arrangement and that the regime, as in many other issues, had basically no other choice than to let, at least on the surface, "a hundred flowers to bloom" and allow space for everything.

The total domination of American film in the 1960s, along with conditions in the film industry in general, confirm that, in this period of Yugoslav-American relations, both sides profited from it, although they had different motivations and goals. America with its Hollywood's exports, often at "dumping" prices, changed Yugoslav society by Americanizing it, and turned "the American way of life" into part of the Yugoslav dream, while the Yugoslav side offered the world an acceptable (and profitable) image of itself, an image of a democratic state in which it was possible to watch *Dr. Strangelove* or *The Russians Are Coming*, and to give prizes to domestic films that criticize, sometimes sharply, the society rewarding them. In the final analysis the citi-

zens of the country profited from this, for, thanks to the political interests of America and Yugoslavia, cast as long- and short-term goals by Washington and pragmatic relaxations by Belgrade, the citizens were able to live a life similar to people in the developed, wealthy, orderly, and democratic world: they could satisfy their needs for culture and entertainment and follow their interests by dreaming various versions of the American and Hollywood dream in their Yugoslav reality.

## CHAPTER 2

# A Change in Rhythm

In the turbulent twentieth century, music is often an indicator of the condition of society and of social changes. It can even be the means by which one measures the degree of democracy that has been reached in certain environments; and in places where it is banned, limited, or misused, it can be said to have left the frame of reference of art and become a herald of democratization and a unique indicator of the adoption of freedom. By and large totalitarian regimes have not tolerated the energy that music brings, especially music with fast rhythms; the Nazis did not tolerate jazz, and the communists proved hostile to both jazz and rock and roll.

During the Cold War music took on an additional dimension; it became a means of propaganda. Because of its importance in spreading Western influences behind the “Iron Curtain,” music was a powerful force in the processes of social change and it was also an important link in moving beyond bounded ideological frameworks.<sup>1</sup> Besides the fact that the crash of cymbals, the blowing of horns, and the chords of guitars make new music, they also represent a new attitude and way of looking at the world. In American centers of power, people quickly grasped that jazz and rock could assist in the smashing of the “Iron Curtain,” although within America these new musical directions were accompanied, on the part of conservatives, with ridicule and considered the product of “a lower culture.” On the other

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<sup>1</sup> Ramet, ed., *Rocking the State*, 1.

hand, the Soviets were at the top in terms of classical music and ballet, and the appearances of the Red Army choir or the artists of the Bolshoi Theatre garnered admiration around the world. As David Caute noted, however, the balalaika could not compete with the electric guitar; jazz, the twist, rock, beat, and disco were what young people wanted, in the East as well as in the West.<sup>2</sup>

The spread of new music all over the planet was a part of the process of Americanization that was unfolding, especially after World War II, in Europe. With the penetration of elements of American popular culture in the form of jazz and rock and roll, even by the 1950s France, Germany, Austria, and Italy had become Americanized, but the countries behind the Iron Curtain were also exposed to this wave, which couched this development in terms of Cold War propaganda. With jazz and rock, new rhythms arrived, as well as new fashions, the English language, new models of behavior, and, what was most important—freedom!

New music destroyed existing taboos with the power that it possessed, and the battles for it, regardless of whether these were between generations, classes, races, or ideologies, widened spaces of freedom. Therefore, both jazz and rock represented threats to the communist regimes, and for America, following appraisals by the mouthpiece of NATO that “when rock and roll or calypso is transplanted to the communist brain, they have a tendency to gnaw away at other things, and of course that has an influence on ideology,” they became a political fact and part of its arsenal for use in anti-communist activities and campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

In the war for jazz and rock and roll, or against jazz and rock and roll, everyone eventually profited—the West derived advantage because its values relatively easily “conquered” the East, and the communist regimes did so because they were able to manipulate music. But ordinary people gained as well, because music changed and enriched the challenges of daily life.

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<sup>2</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 441.

<sup>3</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 19.

## Jazz is Freedom

Hey young fellows, What is there to do  
in a town where there's no jazz band?<sup>4</sup>

### JAZZ AS A MEANS OF PROPAGANDA

The jazz theoretician Joachim Ernst Berendt has described jazz as the music of resistance and protest.<sup>5</sup> This branch of music, which numbers among the most important export articles of American culture in the twentieth century, and which freedom of expression, creativity, and improvisation represented a power challenge to communist regimes during the Cold War, not just because of the country from which it originated but rather because it, by its essence, clashed with everything that communism stood for. And in its musical anti-dogmatism, as in anti-dogmatism of any kind, communist ideologues saw, more than anything, an enemy. The Czech writer Josef Škvorecky, because of the character of jazz, knew very well that it would always be a thorn in the side of all the “ultra-rulers,” from Hitler to Brezhnev.<sup>6</sup>

Accompanying America's first steps in using jazz for propaganda purposes, it became clear that this form of music, because of its improvisation without hesitation—but which nonetheless adhered to certain rules—was a metaphor for the American political system, and was even its glorification. This was, moreover, immediately picked up by the biggest Cold War “promoter of jazz,” the host of the legendary show “Music USA” on the Voice of America, Willis Conover<sup>7</sup>, in the magazine *Jazz Forum* in 1958:

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<sup>4</sup> A hit from the 1960s, “Mala tema iz Srema,” by the Predrag Ivanović Quartet.

<sup>5</sup> Kehl, *Duško Gojković*, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Škvorecki, *Bas-saksofon*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Willis Conover (1920–1996) was one of the most important promoters of jazz in the entire world. He hosted the Voice of America's “Jazz Hour” for over 40 years. It is estimated that his shows were heard by one hundred million people. Paradoxically, this emcee, who was admired around the world,

We agree in advance on the laws and customs that will bind us, and when we've come to terms on that, we are free to do what we want, within those limitations. It's the same thing with jazz. The musicians come to terms on tonality, on changes to harmony and tempo, and on the duration of a given composition. Within the scope of these boundaries, they are free to play however they want. And when people in other countries hear the quality of this music, it stimulates their need for the same freedom in the conduct of their own lives.<sup>8</sup>

Conquering Western Europe, jazz unavoidably “tossed” its sounds and messages across the Iron Curtain too, and it rapidly became a powerful weapon in the Cold War, something that was publicly stated in a text in the *New York Times* in 1955, in which it was remarked that “the United States of America has a secret weapon of sound—jazz.”<sup>9</sup> Then, at the end of 1955 and the beginning of 1956, the use of jazz as a means of Cold War propaganda intensified.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is no wonder that in the Soviet Union there emerged great resistance to this kind of music; the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1952 said that “jazz is a product of the degenerate bourgeois culture of the USA.”<sup>11</sup> The most belligerent Soviet opponents invoked Maxim Gorky and his view that jazz was “the music of fat and unguent capitalists.” In a situation like this, many young people listened secretly to the shows of Willis Conover, bought jazz records on the black market at unbelievably high prices, and tried to play the music themselves in the privacy of their own homes.<sup>12</sup>

At the State Department, people did not immediately recognize all of the political and propagandistic possibilities offered by jazz, because at the highest levels of the American administration there were people

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remained practically unknown in America, since the programs of Voice of America were not permitted to be broadcast inside the United States

<sup>8</sup> “Willis Conover,” Voice of America, [www.voanews.com/english/about2007-willis-conover.cfm](http://www.voanews.com/english/about2007-willis-conover.cfm).

<sup>9</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 202.

<sup>10</sup> Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 445.

<sup>12</sup> J. Vikarijev, “O džezu u SSSR-u,” *Duga* 19, no. 910, May 12, 1963, 34.



who opposed this kind of music, but, when the popularity of jazz became obvious, even to its American critics and to refined diplomats who identified with high culture, Washington realized that the promotion of jazz was one of the most successful ways of promoting America.<sup>13</sup>

The key show that popularized jazz was Willis Conover's "Music USA", which got its start on Voice of America on January 6, 1955. This show was broadcast every evening between two sets of leading news stories. Soon after it began, it became the most listened to show on Voice of America, and thanks to it, and to other Western radio programs, the sounds of jazz inundated the Soviet space in short order, compelling the Soviets to go on the offensive and condemn this American musical trend. The arsenal of "counter-measures" was a spectrum ranging from scrambling jazz shows on Voice of America to arresting jazz musicians.<sup>14</sup> But no sooner did the government step up the pressure than listening to jazz moved very obviously out of the framework of music into that of politics, becoming a sign of rebellion against the system and of the need for freedom. The key characteristic of jazz, improvisation, was, in the recollection of the Soviet dissident Vasily Aksyonov, a flight from control of everyday life, from the five-year plan to historical materialism; it was a kind of "anti-ideology."<sup>15</sup>

By Khrushchev's day it had already become clear, however, that it was impossible to completely control the need of Soviet youth for jazz, and such music could be heard more and more often all over the USSR, with the black market flooded, despite the prohibition of musical *samizdat* since 1958, with illegal recordings from the radio, recorded for the most part on folios of developed X-ray film. In an atmosphere such as this, a jazz orchestra was founded in Leningrad in 1957, with the first jazz club following the next year in the same city, and starting in 1959 there were jazz festivals in the Estonian cities of Tallinn and Tartu.<sup>16</sup> This period is regarded as Khrushchev's "thaw" toward jazz, regardless of his fundamental ignorance of jazz and despite all the criticism he aimed at this musical trend.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 210.

<sup>14</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War*, 115–116.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> J. Vikarijev, "O džezu u SSSR-u," *Duga*, 19, no. 910, May 12, 1963, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*, 33.

Considering these facts, the State Department gave an official nature to the promotion of jazz in the East and Benny Goodman, cooperating with the U.S. government, attempted to visit the Soviet Union starting in 1955. In May 1962 he succeeded in doing so, when he and his large orchestra made a tour through the USSR, in the context of an agreement on cultural cooperation between the United States and the USSR.<sup>18</sup> On one occasion, Khrushchev and his family attended a concert, as did all the members of the Presidium, although Khrushchev's attitude to jazz was illustrated by the fact that he left the concert during the intermission, explaining later to Goodman that he had done so because of "official obligations."<sup>19</sup> Not long after this event, and perhaps as a result of the message behind this gesture by the top man in the Kremlin, there were further restrictions on and criticisms of jazz in the press; Khrushchev even took a stand on jazz, announcing openly in December 1962: "I do not like jazz. When I hear it, it's as though I have gas bubbles in my stomach." This resulted in the closing of the Moscow jazz club. There would not be another visit by an American jazz performer in the Soviet Union until 1971, when Duke Ellington gave concerts in the USSR.<sup>20</sup>

In the remainder of Eastern Europe, the situation was similar. In Poland, where a strong jazz tradition had existed before World War II, the music could not be found on the radio, nor on albums in the shops, although people listened to Voice of America and, after Stalin's death and the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, the attitude toward this musical trend began to change. The first jazz gathering was in Krakow in 1954, and from 1956, a jazz festival was held in Sopot. Indeed, 1956 is considered the decisive year in the history of Polish jazz.<sup>21</sup> In September 1955, Polish radio began to broadcast a show dedicated to jazz, and two months later the first state jazz orchestra

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<sup>18</sup> For more detail on Benny Goodman's tour through the Soviet Union, where he gave 30 concerts in front of 176,800 people, see: Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 100–120.

<sup>19</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 460–461; Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 107–108.

<sup>20</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 462–463.

<sup>21</sup> S. Jakovljević, "Prestavljamo va jazz u Poljskoj," *Duga* 16, no. 773, September 25, 1960, 24.

premiered in Warsaw, after which *Źazz*, described as the only jazz magazine behind the “Iron Curtain,” started to come out.<sup>22</sup> During the second half of the 1950s, while Radio Warsaw was broadcasting Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and other jazz musicians, the Hungarian regime continued to condemn jazz as “a decadent Western malady that brings out hooliganism in people.”<sup>23</sup>

In East Germany at the start of the 1950s, jazz was labeled “a decadent and degenerate part of American cultural barbarism”; the broadcast of jazz on radio was forbidden, as was the making of jazz albums; and strict controls were in place along the borders to prevent the illegal importation of jazz music. In 1952, musical groups were even forbidden to take American names.<sup>24</sup> These restrictions were to some extent loosened in 1954, although resistance to jazz by officials continued to occur. In 1961 there were assertions that jazz clubs were being established by West German agents.<sup>25</sup> Despite pressure and accusations, however, jazz clubs existed by 1956 in East Berlin, Leipzig, Rostock, Dresden, and Halle.<sup>26</sup>

Romania had no “purely professional jazz ensembles,” nor were there specialty magazines or other literature on the domestic market, but Romanians could purchase Polish jazz records and they could order the magazine *Źazz*. Of course people also listened to Willis Conover, as well as to jazz programs on the radio from stations in Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>27</sup> The situation was to some degree more favorable in Czechoslovakia, where, as in Poland, a long tradition of jazz existed. Until the middle of the 1960s, the Czech government sponsored the participation of its musicians in international jazz festivals, and jazz was played in clubs and could be heard on the radio.<sup>28</sup> The sound of jazz accompanied hopes for democratization during the time of Gomulka and Dubček (and it played a prominent role in Czech literature, as well, especially in the works of Škvorecký

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<sup>22</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 117.

<sup>24</sup> Poiger, *Źazz, Rock and Rebels*, 59.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 67, 209.

<sup>26</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> S. Jakovljević, “Dzez u Rumuniji,” *Duga* 19, no. 896, February 3, 1963, 37.

<sup>28</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 463.

and Milan Kundera, and also in Czech film). This lasted until Soviet tanks brought an end to this type of freedom in 1968. Conditions for jazz in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia demonstrated, however, that even behind the “Iron Curtain,” there were possibilities for freedom, at least as far as this musical trend went.

Seeing the importance of jazz and the effects of the political “ups and downs” that occurred to its sound, American diplomats began to send to Eastern Europe, as their cultural ambassadors, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, and Louis Armstrong, because they realized that visits by jazz musicians to these countries were important not only in promoting music but also in promoting American culture, and in undermining communism itself.<sup>29</sup>

“JAZZ BLARES FROM ALL SIDES AND YOU OFTEN CAN’T  
HEAR OUR MUSIC ANYMORE”

As in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia also had a tradition of playing and listening to jazz prior to World War II. The sounds of jazz coming from albums, out of bars, and concert halls in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana in the 1930s pointed to the openness of Yugoslav spaces to Western, and in this case American music, even in the interwar period.

During the German occupation of Belgrade, musicians continued to create melodies that were influenced by American music, and in 1942 the German conductor Hans Georg Schütz, working at Radio Beograd, created the Big Band orchestra, which also played jazz. The real rise of jazz in occupied Belgrade came when the German Friedrich Mayer took up the baton at this orchestra; Serbian jazz musicians recall his being an anti-Nazi, and inclined to a love of America, perhaps because he loved jazz.<sup>30</sup> In Slovenia, a jazz club also opened its doors just after the beginning of World War II; it was a screen for operations of the Liberation Front, while in Zagreb in 1943 there was

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<sup>29</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 212.

<sup>30</sup> Jakovljević, *Jedan vek džeza i kratki prilozi za izučavanje džeza u Srbiji*, 62–63.

a concert in which Ivo Robić, who was later a European musical star, was accompanied by jazz musicians.<sup>31</sup>

One could even say that people celebrated the liberation of Belgrade to the sounds of jazz: the first film shown in the city two days after the liberation, when there were still Soviet troops around, was *Sun Valley Serenade*, a movie that had jazz as its subject and jazz on the soundtrack. While the apparatus of the state was being changed, by revolutionary means and in many ways without quarter, and as the iconography of the city was being altered, Belgraders could enjoy in their cinemas a movie in which Glenn Miller's orchestra played the famous song "Chattanooga Choo Choo." This film with jazz numbers became, therefore, a kind of symbol. The merry *Sun Valley Serenade* was actually the logical continuation of Belgrade traditions and its openness to the West, and it relativized, at least for the moment, the coming ideologization and Sovietization of culture which would kick in immediately after the establishment of the new government.

This all contained elements of Allied triumphalism and solidarity, since, for example, at the liberation of Krakow Soviet jazz musicians also performed "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and the music from *Sun Valley Serenade* was also played by the jazz orchestra of the Red Army on the occasion of its liberation of Prague in 1945.<sup>32</sup> By the second half of 1945, however, pressure not to play any more American music began to be felt, although in that same year one could still listen to a big jazz orchestra in Zagreb, and in Ljubljana, where the Radio Ljubljana Dance Orchestra had been founded right after the end of the war in May 1945. It was better known as The Big Band, as the repertoire contained mostly marches and pop hits but also some jazz in the style of swing.<sup>33</sup>

The battle over jazz continued and intensified in the first years after the establishment of the communist government in Yugoslavia. Based on the same ideas as the Soviet regime and the regimes of the Soviet satellites, the Yugoslav regime also attempted to outlaw the performance of this kind of music, because it contained something

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<sup>31</sup> Luković, *Bolja prošlost*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Cate, *The Dancer Defects*, 442.

<sup>33</sup> "60 Years of Big Band RTV Slovenia," [www.rtvsl.si/bigband/history.php](http://www.rtvsl.si/bigband/history.php); Luković, *Bolja prošlost*, 22, 43; Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 115.

unpredictable, something that it was impossible to harmonize with the prescribed system and its framework of values. Recalling the conditions in those years, famous Yugoslav jazz musician, Duško Gojković says: "For communists, it was something directed against the government and the whole system. We were supposed to talk, think, and play the way Karl Marx would have imagined. But in Marx there was no mention of Ellington or Charlie Parker."<sup>34</sup> And he continues, explicitly equating jazz with the opening up of freedom: "For us, playing jazz was a kind of freedom. No commissar could come in off the street and tell me how I was supposed to do the improvisation on my trumpet. That was the one issue where I was able to decide what I was going to play. For us that was freedom."<sup>35</sup>

Political and ideological rigidity toward jazz immediately after the war did not, however, prevent the founding of new jazz bands, probably because there were more "concrete" enemies and more urgent tasks. The Radio Zagreb Dance Orchestra, a forerunner of big band music, began to perform in Croatia during the radio season 1946–1947.<sup>36</sup> In 1946, Vojislav-Bubiša Simić formed the first Dynamo Big Band in Serbia, and in the year of the break with the USSR (1948), Radio Belgrade founded its popular music orchestra, which in 1960 changed its name to the Jazz Orchestra of Radio-Television Belgrade.<sup>37</sup> These facts together go some distance toward dismantling the dogma that "the evil communists eliminated jazz," because by 1948 there were already seven "big bands" in Yugoslavia.

With jazz gaining more and more followers, it is possible to get a presentiment of the fact that ovations for jazz were actually, in some cases, applause for America, something to which the government was compelled to react. In 1947, Milovan Đilas stated that "America is our sworn enemy, and so is jazz, since its a product of that country," and that was sufficient grounds for the sounds of this "enemy" music to more or less disappear from the airwaves of Radio Belgrade.<sup>38</sup> But

<sup>34</sup> Kehl, *Duško Gojković*, 28.

<sup>35</sup> "Džez je sloboda," TV show *Polygraph*, B92, November 16, 2007, [www.b92.net/infor/emisije/poligraf.php?yyyy=2007&mm=11&nav\\_id=272839](http://www.b92.net/infor/emisije/poligraf.php?yyyy=2007&mm=11&nav_id=272839).

<sup>36</sup> [www.jazz.hr/pub/novosti/dodijeljene\\_nagrade\\_status\\_2007/popur\\_hr.htm](http://www.jazz.hr/pub/novosti/dodijeljene_nagrade_status_2007/popur_hr.htm).

<sup>37</sup> Jakovljević, *Jedan vek džeza*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> Luković, *Bolja prošlost*, 11.

the need for jazz, which of course, despite ideological pressures, represented the need for freedom, could not be so easily suppressed. Thus, for example, on the occasion of a guest appearance by the orchestra of Radio Ljubljana, which was performing the repertoire of Glenn Miller in Belgrade, the police had to defend the venue from the onslaught of the public, and when they could not succeed in doing so, members of the secret police began to arrest audience members after the concert, convinced that the American embassy had organized it.<sup>39</sup> The conflict with Stalin, however, also changed the governments relationship with jazz. In Slovenia, Edvard Kardelj “defended” jazz in 1951 at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia, with the remark that “people cannot live by symphonies alone”; that same year the Party newspaper, *Ljudska pravica*, ran a polemic about jazz.<sup>40</sup> The amazed testimony of a Party functionary from Belgrade shows that jazz was becoming more and more common in Slovenia: at the beginning of 1948, he heard young people singing a military song while in a labor brigade—a song in the style of jazz.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, although many jazz musicians recall that jazz immediately became undesirable in communist Yugoslavia, the fact that jazz orchestras were founded in 1946, that these were in state institutions (Radio Zagreb, Radio Belgrade, Radio Ljubljana), and that concerts were held all point to a contradictory state of affairs. And jazz did not disappear with the arrival of the new ideology. It is possible that the issue is the deep roots of jazz as a musical genre, since jazz was for the 1930s and 1940s what rock and roll was for the 1960s, and thus the new authorities found it difficult to “waste” their energy on jazz-related issues in times when much “more urgent” tasks presented themselves.

In the fall of 1948, when conditions were already changing because of the break with Moscow, a competition of jazz orchestras was held in Belgrade; there were so many people interested in seeing it that those who could not get into the venue broke down the doors.<sup>42</sup> On this occasion there was no obvious intervention by the police. Apparently the “no” to Stalin connoted a “yes” to jazz, although in

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>40</sup> Gabrič, *Socijalistična kulturna revolucija*, 103.

<sup>41</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 119.

<sup>42</sup> Lučić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do twist*, 52.



the first few years after the break with the Soviet Union jazz musicians did have to make considerable concessions to the regime. Thus the Dynamo Orchestra, for instance, had a repertory that included around 15 American hits, several Russian songs, and the inescapable folk song “Kozaračko kolo,” which it would play for a half hour.<sup>43</sup> The mechanism of “relaxation and squeezing” on issues of culture and creative work, and even in political life, was present in Yugoslavia throughout the entire socialist epoch, and it did not spare jazz. In the year Stalin died, 1953, Tito criticized this kind of music twice, announcing that “jazz does not mesh with our character or our reality” and that “jazz is blaring from all sides and our music often cannot be heard.”<sup>44</sup> These critical statements by Tito, however, like that of Đilas from 1947, did not influence the development of jazz in the country. Moreover, in 1953 came the foundation of the Association of Jazz Musicians, which began, in that same year, to publish their own journal dedicated to jazz, which meant that the government decided to recognize, if also institutionally “channel,” this music.

That jazz had been amnestied, and become established in Yugoslavia, is attested by the first permanent shows featuring jazz on the radio: on Tuesdays in 1958 Radio Zagreb broadcast the show called *Fifteen Minutes of Jazz*, while Radio Ljubljana had *For Friends of Jazz*, and Radio Belgrade had *For Jazz Lovers*. The most highly regarded show was *Around the World of Jazz* on Radio Ljubljana, which was broadcast on Thursdays. This was also a time in which translations of important books on jazz came out. *The Jazz Book* by Joachim Berendt, which came out in 1953 and had print runs around the world reaching into the millions, was published in Yugoslavia in 1958. In addition, *The History of Jazz in America* (1958) by Barry Ulanov and *The First Book of Jazz* (1959) by Langston Hughes were published in Rijeka.<sup>45</sup>

Americans, for their part, were happy that jazz was present in Yugoslavia, and they followed its establishment in institutions (the creation of the Association of Jazz Musicians), as well as its promotion on the radio waves and in the publishing industry. In a report by the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade in 1954, it was stressed that “prob-

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 471.

<sup>45</sup> Jakovljević, *Jedan vek džeza*, 96–98.



ably the most striking manifestation of Western influence on Yugoslav radio programming is the surprisingly large amount of room dedicated to American jazz music.”<sup>46</sup> In that same year, America outfitted the radio station in Novi Sad with the most powerful relay equipment in Eastern Europe, in order to spread propaganda behind the “Iron Curtain,” on the condition that the radio station also play two hours of jazz per day.<sup>47</sup> Observing that jazz had “fallen onto favorable soil” in Yugoslavia, Washington moved to support directly the popularization of jazz, and on May 9, 1956, Dizzie Gillespie gave two concerts in Belgrade. The following year the Glenn Miller jazz orchestra toured the country.<sup>48</sup> On the American side, Gillespie’s appearance was seen both as a sign of Yugoslavia’s cultural autonomy as compared to the other communist countries and as a “triumph of the West.”<sup>49</sup> The legendary Louis Armstrong also traveled to Yugoslavia for the first time in the spring of 1959, and a special reception, accompanied by the sound of his famous composition “When the Saints Go Marching In,” was prepared for him at the Belgrade airport.<sup>50</sup>

By conquering the Yugoslav cultural and political “market,” jazz occupied a glorious place between high diplomacy and the export of consumer goods (jeans, Coca-Cola). But it was not simply something people smuggled in, as was usually the case in other communist countries. As far as jazz was concerned, Washington “entered” Yugoslavia by an open, or at least half-opened, door, by dint of a love for jazz that already existed as well as the political pragmatism of the Yugoslav authorities. From the start of the 1950s and on through the 1960s the greatest legends of jazz gave shows in Yugoslavia: Louis Armstrong, Woody Herman, Sarah Vaughan, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, and Dizzy Gillespie. It is also important to note that these concerts were also attended by people from Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria, who were perhaps seeking the sounds of freedom more than musical delight.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 471.

<sup>47</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> AJ, 559, F-91a, Saradnja sa SAD, 1957.

<sup>49</sup> Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*, 51.

<sup>50</sup> Popović, *Slavni gosti Srbije*, 67–68.

<sup>51</sup> “Otrgnuti džez od zaborava,” *Politika*, February 29, 2008, [www.politika.rs/rubrike/zivot-i-stil/ritam/Otrgnuti-dzez-od-zaborava.lt.html](http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/zivot-i-stil/ritam/Otrgnuti-dzez-od-zaborava.lt.html).

The extent to which jazz became, in a relatively short period of time, a kind of public space is substantiated by the musical hit, from the beginning of the 1960s, called "A Little Melody from Srem," in which the singer says, "Hey young fellows/What is there to do/in a town where there's no jazz band?" The lyrics of this song point out, by combining amusing lines and the problematization of a concrete question, that jazz had come to be omnipresent, and that its absence, even in small communities, represented a near unsolvable problem with a fateful question hanging over it: "What is there to do?"

Josip Broz Tito's attitude toward jazz also underwent a radical evolution in comparison to his statement from 1953. On Youth Day in 1959 (May 25), a concert was held to accompany the activities of the rally. The concert was held at the Belgrade Fair, and as part of it the Jazz Orchestra of Radio Belgrade made an appearance. When the jazz musician Vojislav Bubiša Simić asked Tito directly, "Is it true that you do not like jazz?" Tito responded, "No, I like it, especially this original kind."<sup>52</sup> Tito did, however, exhibit a critical attitude toward jazz again in 1962, when he stated that "For me, jazz isn't music; it's noise."<sup>53</sup> He was somewhat milder in 1964, when he said:

I have nothing against modern dances and jazz. They, too, are necessary. Young people should have fun. But jazz should not be the sole foundation of their education. We should also cultivate classical music, which is much higher, and, in general, we should cultivate music that is not vulgarized.<sup>54</sup>

Regardless of Tito's personal views on jazz, at the celebrations on Youth Day the Jazz Orchestra of Radio-Television Belgrade performed "Big John Special," "Moonlight Serenade," and "In the Mood," which certainly pleased many of the guests and also representatives of the American embassy, because in this way jazz was moving to the mainstream, especially at the highest levels of the state, and it also signi-

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<sup>52</sup> Simić, *Susreti i sećanja*, 87–88.

<sup>53</sup> V. Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita*, vol. 3 (Belgrade, 1984), 609.

<sup>54</sup> "Iz razgovora sa delegacijom Muzičke omladine, 29 aprila 1964," Tito, *Govori i članci*, knjiga XIX (Zagreb, 1967), 70–73.

fied the official acceptance by Yugoslavia of one of the most decidedly American movements in art and culture of the twentieth century.

### THE 1960S AND JAZZ IN YUGOSLAVIA

The 1960s were also years of the promotion and development of jazz in Yugoslavia, as well as of the struggle for its full affirmation. America played a part in this, on the one hand, by continuing its propaganda activities, while on the other hand Yugoslav radio stations also promoted it, as did the Association of Jazz Musicians and musicians themselves. Jazz was no longer to be found only on the stage at music events or on the waves coming from radio stations; it overwhelmed other spaces, too. Thus, for example, there was a regular column called "Jazz Panorama" in the weekly news magazine *Duga*, in which readers could learn everything about the history of jazz, currents within jazz, concerts by Yugoslav jazz ensembles, and also the most recent events in jazz from all over the world. In Slovenia the newspaper *Tovariš* also initiated a column called "The World of Jazz."<sup>55</sup> And in *Duga* there was a notice in the early 1960s that only Radio Novi Sad broadcast more than 500 minutes of this kind of music per week, and that in doing so it surpassed even Radio Ljubljana with its 250 weekly minutes of jazz.<sup>56</sup> The production of jazz records began to grow as the years passed, and pride of place in the production of a jazz playlist went to the two most powerful state record companies, Jugoton from Zagreb and RTB Records; together they released 50 jazz records by 1963.<sup>57</sup>

Above all, what accounted for the growth in popularity of jazz was the activities of domestic jazz musicians, but the State Department and the American Embassy in Belgrade gave an additional boost to its popularity. The American Reading Room and the Russian Center competed for favor, especially for that of young people; while the Russian Center "enticed the younger public to come to evenings filled with classical music from Russia, folk songs, and love songs," the programs of the evenings in the American Reading Room "were dominated by

<sup>55</sup> Raković, *Rokenrol u Jugoslaviji*, 162.

<sup>56</sup> Jakovljević, *Jedan vek džeza*, 97.

<sup>57</sup> S. Jakovljević, "Džez na domaćim gramofonskim pločama," *Duga* 19, no. 893, January 13, 1963, 34.

modern music and jazz,” which meant that from the start the choice of the majority of young people would be more than certain.<sup>58</sup> The jazz musician Duško Gojković recalls that the evenings of listening to American records in the Reading Room, where “a not so small number of young people” had gathered, made a notable contribution to the popularization of the music form.<sup>59</sup>

Willis Conover's show on Voice of America had, as we previously noted, a magical appeal in that day and age, and it was a source of inspiration for jazz musicians from all over the Eastern bloc. Conover's significance was apparent not just in Yugoslavia but also throughout Europe. Research carried out in Poland demonstrates that he was considered to be “the best-known living American.”<sup>60</sup> The State Department knew how to make use of the popularity of jazz in Willis Conover's shows, and so this legendary promoter of jazz, whom the *New York Times* would describe in its obituary of him as a man who proved to be more effective in the battle between the forces of communism and democracy than a fleet of B-29s,<sup>61</sup> made a visit to Yugoslavia in June 1960. This ambassador of jazz reached Yugoslavia after visiting Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece, where he had given lectures on American jazz and listened to local jazz groups. He spent a week in Yugoslavia, during which time he had opportunities to hear music by the Belgrade, Novi Sad, Zagreb, and Ljubljana jazz orchestras. Afterward he played recordings of the Jazz Orchestra of Radio-Television Belgrade on the Voice of America. As a true cultural diplomat, Conover was able, by posing to Yugoslav musicians the simple question “Why do you like jazz?”, to lead people to the answer that the American Embassy and the State Department both wanted: that it was the improvisation and freedom of expression that attracted them to jazz. Freedom, in other words!<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> IAB, fond GK, SKS, K-512, O nekim pitanjima kontaktiranja sa strancima i inostranoj propagandi (Belgrade, June 1961).

<sup>59</sup> Kehl, *Duško Gojković*, 24–25.

<sup>60</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 117.

<sup>61</sup> “Willis Conover, 75, Voice of America Disc Jockey,” *New York Times*, May 19, 1996, p. 35, [www.writing.epenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/conover-obit.html](http://www.writing.epenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/conover-obit.html).

<sup>62</sup> S. Jakovljević, “Džez je romantican?,” *Duga* 16, no. 759, June 19, 1960, 22–23.

Yugoslav jazz orchestras often performed in Eastern Bloc countries, but their appearances on the Western scene meant a lot more, because they were testimony to the quality of Yugoslav jazz. After the Voice of America broadcast the Belgrade radio orchestras work, that ensemble received an invitation to the first Festival of European Jazz in France, in Juan-les Pins, where they won first prize; this was a definite confirmation of quality in terms of European standards.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, the guest appearances of Yugoslav jazz musicians in Eastern Europe were, in addition to being demonstrations of the high quality of Yugoslav music, also one of the means of “exporting” a Western variant of communism, and a Western “product” into Eastern communist space. This pleased the Yugoslav regime, for it enabled the regime to come across in the West as all the more democratic and open to freedom, while it also suited Washington, since it brought American culture behind the “Iron Curtain.” As far as the East was concerned, owing to these Western “incursions,” Yugoslavia was regarded with a certain amount of envy and jealousy, as well as with pining for Yugoslav material conditions. An illustrative example of what Yugoslavia stood for to the Soviet satellites was without doubt the eagerly awaited performance of the Jazz Orchestra of Radio Belgrade in Budapest in March 1957, several months after the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary, at a time when a curfew was still in place. According to the memoirs of Vojislav-Bubiša Simić:

At that time those of us who had come from Tito's Yugoslavia seemed like heralds of some new era. And even our music, that is to say, our jazz, was a pleasure they had never before experienced . . . When we had crossed the border on our trip back home, we said: it's true that there are a lot of things that aren't right by us, but there you can see people who live worse than we do.<sup>64</sup>

This musician who played such an important role in the history of Yugoslav jazz realized that, even with the relativization of professional

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<sup>63</sup> *Politika*, July 17, 1960, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Simić, *Susreti i sećanja*, 73.

achievements on the “Eastern tour,” the frenetic chanting of the audience at their concerts in Budapest and East Berlin contained a protest against the Soviet occupation.

Taking into account their relations with America, and especially the benefit that these relations could bring, the Yugoslav regime saw, above all in the 1960s, an opportunity to display its openness and liberalism through its stance on jazz. Indeed this was easy enough to do in the case of jazz, because after some initial euphoria and indications of a potential mass audience of its admirers, it slowly made its way into the space of elite culture. Of decisive influence in this was the promulgation of the decision that in 1963, on Marshal Tito Square in the city of Titovo Užice, the Jazz Orchestra of Radio-Television Belgrade would play “at a special event on the occasion of the anniversary of the Republic of Užice.”<sup>65</sup> Since the “Republic of Užice” was treated as one of the “holy sites” of the communist revolution, the choice of the square named after Marshall Tito was a place from which the notes of what was once “enemy music” would reverberate but was more than simply an empty gesture from the realm of culture. What is more, in that period jazz made its way into the schools as well, so that in the organization called Serbian Music Youth, a team of musicians, together with a psychologist, gave classes in jazz in the music schools in Valjevo and Subotica.<sup>66</sup>

As we have already noted, an important role in the development of jazz in Yugoslavia was played by the guest appearances of international jazz musicians, most of whom came as a “gift” from America. Up until 1960, there had been eight guest performances of jazz in Yugoslavia: the Jutta Hipp combo, the orchestra Two Beat Stompers, the big band of Dizzy Gillespie, the big band of Glenn Miller, the trio (and later quintet) of Horst Jankowski and Tony Scott, the Milan Jazz Octet, and Louis Armstrong and his group.<sup>67</sup> The first major show in the 1960s was by the Modern Jazz Quartet, founded in 1951 by soloists from

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<sup>65</sup> P. Stefanović Grof, *Džez orkestar Radio-televizije Beograd* (Belgrade, 1998), 49.

<sup>66</sup> “Povratak džezu,” *Politika*, April 2, 1969, 10.

<sup>67</sup> S. Jakovljević, “O našem ljubitelju džeza,” *Duga* 16, no. 752, May 1, 1960, 36.

Dizzy Gillespie's group, which had appearances in Skopje, Niš, Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana.<sup>68</sup>

The most important shows of the whole decade, though, were those of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. The "first lady of jazz" held two concerts in Belgrade on February 21, 1961.<sup>69</sup> And Louis Armstrong, on his second visit to the country in March 1965, gave concerts in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana as part of tour from which he also visited East Berlin, Prague, and Bucharest, combining a cultural mission with, to judge from the choice of cities, a propaganda one. *Politika* wrote that despite "the unaccustomedly high cost of tickets," the hall of the Center for Labor Unions was filled almost down to the last seat.<sup>70</sup>

Turning now to the remaining foreign musical visitors, the renowned Cole Porter spent more than two weeks in Yugoslavia. For followers of jazz, and for the broader public as well, a special attraction was his arrival on a 30 meter-long luxury yacht.<sup>71</sup> In May 1966 the Woody Herman Orchestra also visited Yugoslavia in conjunction with a tour through Asia, Africa, and Europe; Duško Gojković played with them. Gojković, the most famous of all Yugoslav jazz musicians, played again as a global star in his own country in December 1967, when he gave concerts with an international jazz quintet in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Novi Sad, and Skopje. This tour was underwritten in part by the American Embassy in Belgrade, and it is yet another example of American support of the development of Yugoslav jazz.<sup>72</sup> George Goodman played before overflowing crowds in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Skopje, and Belgrade in February 1968, performing works by Cole Porter, George Gershwin, and other American composers. The American journal *Pregled* emphasized that the concerts in all of the cities were attended by high government officials as well as by thousands of audience members.<sup>73</sup> That same year, the history of jazz in the United States was the subject of an exhibition that was held in

<sup>68</sup> "Modern džez kvartet," *Politika*, May 20, 1960, 10.

<sup>69</sup> "Plemeniti džez," *NIN*, February 26, 1961, 8.

<sup>70</sup> "Vatromet zvuka," *Politika*, April 1, 1965, 11.

<sup>71</sup> "Gong," *Ritam*, no. 44, July 15, 1964.

<sup>72</sup> "Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi," *Pregled*, January 1968, 11, no. 1, 41.

<sup>73</sup> "Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi," *Pregled*, April 1968, 11, no. 4, 38–39.

the Municipal Museum of Kranj, Slovenia, from November 18th to the 27th.<sup>74</sup> The Yugoslav jazz festival in Bled also aided considerably in the general popularization and establishment of jazz in Yugoslavia, which began in 1960 and was held every summer. At this festival, nothing but jazz music was performed, and it was a requirement that at least two Yugoslav compositions be played. From the second year of the festival onward (1961), more and more foreign participation was introduced, including Willis Conover, who attended as a guest.<sup>75</sup> But, when taking the broad perspective on the eruption of jazz into the Yugoslav space, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that Poland and the USSR got their jazz festivals before Yugoslavia did—in 1956 and 1959, respectively—regardless of the liberalization of the views of Yugoslav politicians on that music form.

When one sums up the wide-ranging effects of the popularization of jazz in Yugoslavia, the result is, without doubt, positive, and in some aspects it is surely even impressive. From Titos statement that jazz “does not fit our character or our reality,” to Đilas judgment that “America is our sworn enemy, and jazz, as its product, is, too,” to the celebration of communist holidays with the participation of jazz musicians and the arrival of jazz in schools, we see the country traveling the typical Yugoslav path of “restriction and relaxation” in everything impinging upon politics and ideology, but with extremely positive effects.

From the American point of view, it must have been satisfying, at any rate, to see the Yugoslav “story of jazz.” Thanks to the broadcasts by Willis Conover on Voice of America, and the dispatch of the very best jazz musicians to tour Yugoslavia, Washington succeeded not only in gaining a foothold for jazz in a communist country, but also in institutionalizing it. While the boss of the USSR grumbled “When I hear [jazz], it’s as though I have gas bubbles in my stomach,” jazz musicians serenaded the boss of Yugoslavia on his birthday. Such occurrences likely brought the Americans satisfaction, and they served as yet another confirmation of success in the realization of their goals. Official recognition of jazz on the part of Yugoslav state institutions (the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., no. 1, 41.

<sup>75</sup> AJ, 142, F-128, Pregled festivala i ostalih većih kulturno umetničkih manifestacija.



founding of the jazz association, the formation of orchestras connected with radio stations, the organization of festivals, and so on) were, in a certain way, also a recognition of American interests. Thanks to the promotion of jazz by Americans, and also by Yugoslavs, another important effect was registered, as collateral for the future: a powerful group of domestic jazz artists was formed, and they came away from international festivals with prizes, or, like Duško Gojković, they played all over the world with giants of jazz such as Dizzie Gillespie, Woody Herman, Chet Baker, and Miles Davis. And in the case of jazz, as in the majority of cases involving Yugoslav-American relations, both sides were satisfied. The Americans, in promoting jazz, were promoting their own culture, and indirectly their policies, too, and they were successful in seeing jazz become a component of the cultural life in a socialist society. Meanwhile, the Yugoslav government, with the institutionalization of jazz, showed the West how liberal it was, and, by demonstrating that liberality, as well as the quality of its musicians, it showed the East that the “separate path” to socialism had its advantages, even in the sphere of music. It was ordinary people who, in the end, gained the most from this, both directly and indirectly, and both practically and symbolically. From the first bars of Glen Miller heard in just-liberated Belgrade, through the establishment of jazz orchestras, jazz dances, jazz festivals, a jazz record industry, to the tours of the biggest stars in jazz from around the world, they were the ones listening to the rhythm of this seductive and sought-after music, and they also, step-by-step, also caught on to the rhythm of freedom.

## Rock and Roll for Socialism/ Socialism for Rock and Roll

“If I weren’t singing *sevdalinke*, I’d be singing rock.”

— HIMZO POLOVINA<sup>76</sup>

### ROCK AND ROLL AND THE COLD WAR

Numbering among the most visible examples of the Westernization of Yugoslav society were the American and British influences that arrived in Yugoslavia via music. While it was mostly Americanization that was at work in most other fields, from politics and economics to the quality of daily life, in music we find, because of the influence coming from several Western centers, Westernization in the broadest sense. American and British rock groups worked “in cahoots” and inspired many Yugoslav rock groups in the 1960s, while American and English rock and roll could be heard everywhere.

Jazz and rock were not, however, the only kinds of music that people listened to in that decade. Much earlier, and much more so than this kind of music, people were interested in radio hits and folk music. At the start of the 1960s, the strongest influence came from Italian music, and the hits were most likely to come from San Remo festival. In addition to Italian music, French *chansons* were popular, but also Mexican music, as interpreted through the large number of Mexican films in Yugoslav cinemas. Among the biggest hits of those years were “Mama Juanita” and “Marina” by Rocco Granata. In local popular music, these “models” were followed by singers such as Ivo Robić, Đorđe Marjanović, Beti Jurković, Lola Novaković, and Tereza Kesovija. There were also plenty of original folk melodies to be heard, but in that decade neo-folk music also began to come to prominence.

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<sup>76</sup> Dr. Himzo Polovina (1927–1986) was one of the most famous singers and composers of *sevdalinke*, traditional Bosnian songs. This quote is found in the permanent collections of the Sarajevo museum called *Art Kuća sevdaha*.

This was actually the beginning of the rise of that musical genre, which reached its peak in the 1970s and 1980s.

Today, however, it is very difficult to ascertain which kind of music was most popular in Yugoslavia. The extant data does show that popular music sold the best (61% of record sales), followed by folk music (34%), but these numbers probably do not correspond to the real situation, because fans of folk music were to be found predominantly in the poorer social strata, and they typically did not have record players, but got their music from the radio.<sup>77</sup> Analysis is further complicated by the fact that these figures cannot be broken down to show which types of popular music are in question. They do, nonetheless, even in their incomplete state, demonstrate that, although it was only one segment of popular music, rock and roll became a relevant musical trend in Yugoslavia in the 1960s.

As a completely new phenomenon in both music and mass culture, rock and roll succeeded, in the most dynamic era of the Cold War, to unify both supporters and opponents of NATO; both democrats and communists; monarchists and republicans; believers and atheists; and it grew into a unique movement.<sup>78</sup> From the moment that New York DJ Alan Freed gave the name “rock and roll” to this new music in 1951, its rhythms and explosive energy began to spread around the world, as fast and as unstoppably as a grass fire. The power of the music joined together, in the shortest time imaginable, millions of individual desires and fears into one general, easily understandable slogan of rebellion. Thus rock and roll became the medium that enabled, by its universality, mass communication, and its sensibilities appealed to young people.<sup>79</sup> The message it bore was not just in its beat, its melody or its rhythm, but also in the fact that it was made by young people, who invested it with their own views on the world, and with particular types of behavior, symbols, rituals, and connotations.<sup>80</sup> Rock and roll—like jazz, but with a broader fan base—was a response to the supposed inviolability of forms, canons, and rules.

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<sup>77</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 96.

<sup>78</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 218.

<sup>79</sup> Lj. Trifunović, *Vibracije* (Belgrade, 1986), 21.

<sup>80</sup> Maze, *Bezgranična zabava*, 173.

Both in the United States where it saw the light of day, and across the world, rock and roll was seen as a subversive activity from the time of its infancy. All types of rebellion emerged from the phenomenon of rock and roll—young people against the old, modern people against conservatives, the poor against the rich, African-Americans against racial discrimination, pacifists against the war in Vietnam. Meanwhile, in the countries behind the “Iron Curtain,” it also represented a revolt against communism. The force behind it, as well as the fact that it swept away everything before it, led it to be accepted in America after initial opposition; the principle at work was “If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em.”<sup>81</sup>

This same principle, for the same reasons, was also employed by the government in Yugoslavia, but with one further calculation: the possibility of having rock and roll work for the system.

Even strategists at NATO quickly realized how significant and powerful rock and roll was. By 1958, in NATO’s official publication *Revue militaire générale*, we see an explanation of how jazz and rock and roll could be used in the war against communism. It was thought, in a reductionistic but essentially accurate way, that the more a young person listened to Little Richard, the less time he or she would have to spend reading Marx and Lenin.<sup>82</sup> In Yugoslavia’s case, that prediction proved to be accurate.

In the 1960s, this type of music detonated forcefully, and even the strictly controlled media could not avoid it. It turned out, however, and not for the first time, that in addition to the calculations of NATO and the American administration, the Yugoslav government was also making some of its own. The musician and composer Zoran Simjanović maintained that “the fear that the Russians were going to attack the country and arrest Tito and the others in power” opened up space for jazz and Western popular music to receive the government’s blessing.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Simjanović, *Kako sam postao (i pretao) da budem roker*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 26.

<sup>83</sup> Simjanović, *Kako sam postao (i pretao) da budem roker*, 10.

## ROCK AND ROLL BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

In the countries behind the “Iron Curtain,” it was not just the fact that rock and roll came from the West that made it part of people’s longings for a different life and for a system held up by prohibitions, strict rules, and the limitations of personal freedoms; it was also because of the substance of rock and roll. Therefore, it did represent a menace to the regimes of its day. At the time of its global breakthrough and rise, rock and roll infected the Soviet Union and its satellites simultaneously. This even created a kind of paradox in the USSR: despite the Kremlin’s efforts to prevent it or harness the power of this new music, a kind of “initiation” into rock took place in Moscow in 1957. In fact, in the hope of showing the world what kinds of changes had taken effect in the USSR since the death of Stalin, the Soviet authorities hosted the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957. The result they achieved, however, was completely unexpected: tens of thousands of Soviet young people were infected once and for all with mass culture, such as jeans, jazz, the boogie-woogie, rock and roll, Beat poetry, modern art—and also freedom of speech.<sup>84</sup>

All of this did not transpire overnight, of course. Since the 1950s, people called *stilyagi*<sup>85</sup> had been visible on the streets of Moscow, Leningrad, Tallinn, and Riga; they scandalized Communist society by their tight pants, white shirts with narrow ties, American nicknames, and by being completely caught up in pop music and dancing.<sup>86</sup> Shortly after the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students, “beatniks” made their appearance in the USSR, wearing jeans and sandals and listening to rock and roll.<sup>87</sup> The parallel to the *stilyagi* in Poland were called *bikini-arze*, after the island in the South Pacific where the American atomic bombs were tested, and in Czechoslovakia they were called *páseki*, and

<sup>84</sup> Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 11; Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 18; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 159; Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 30–31.

<sup>85</sup> The word is derived from the Russian *stil* (style), and means dandies, fops, clothes horses, or Beau Brummels.

<sup>86</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 13–20; Ryback, *Rock Around the Clock*, 9–10.

<sup>87</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 18.

they gathered on Wenceslas Square in Prague, chewing on paraffin wax instead of the unattainable chewing gum.<sup>88</sup>

Although the worldwide hits “Rock Around the Clock” and “See You Later, Alligator” by Bill Haley and the Comets turned into hits in the Soviet Union, too, shortly after their release, there was no understanding of this type of music on the part of the authorities. The appearance of the Beatles and “Beatlemania” was quite unsettling to the regimes of the countries behind the “Iron Curtain,” which spread unstoppably around the world after the spring of 1964.<sup>89</sup> Thus, we can say that rock and roll, which in high political circles was treated as pro-Western propaganda and a danger to the system, made its way mostly illegally into the USSR and other countries of Eastern Europe. As was the case with jazz, an underground “cottage industry” began to flourish in the Soviet Union—gramophone records copied onto X-ray plates which, because of the material onto which they were impressed, were known as records “on ribs.”<sup>90</sup>

Poland and Hungary had a somewhat more evolved rock scene. It appears that Janos Kadar in Hungary and Vladislav Gomulka in Poland realized that, after the uprisings of 1956, it was not necessary to clamp down in all spheres of life; and therefore in both countries, rock and roll was accepted, so that at the start of the 1960s it had advanced to a stage “not found in any other country of the Warsaw Pact.”<sup>91</sup> The situation was similar in Czechoslovakia, right up until the final extinction of freedoms by the Soviet troops in 1968. But, prior to the Soviet occupation, rock and roll in Czechoslovakia made its way into schools in 1964, with classes in modern music, including songs by the Beatles, the Shadows, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley.<sup>92</sup> Polish, Hungarian, and Czechoslovakian authorities sized up the situation effectively: a suppression of rock and roll would not be able to achieve the desired results in a situation in which the population listened en masse to Western radio stations, so they opted for a grudging liberalization. By permitting rock music to come through their own media

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<sup>88</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 9–10.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 19.

<sup>91</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 22–24.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 59, 75.

and by other controlled routes, two goals were realized: the establishment of a certain degree of control over young people and a demonstration to the West of the breadth of socialist democracy. The only country that succeeded in “protecting” its young people from rock and roll was Albania.<sup>93</sup>

The strong pressures that were in existence, and the realistic assessments that forbearance was nonetheless in order, contributed to the creation of rock groups that were strictly supervised. In the Soviet Union, the first group, the Revengers, was formed in Riga in 1961, and it played the songs of Elvis, Bill Haley, and Little Richard, using Czechoslovakian electric guitars and a bass guitar that was home-made.<sup>94</sup> Young people in the Soviet Union had to wait two more years for their next rock band, when a group called the Juniors was established in Estonia, while in Leningrad and Moscow the earliest groups began to appear in 1964 and 1965. Still, a proper intoxication with rock started, as contemporaries recall, only with the Beatles.<sup>95</sup> Hard rock, though, was in for a rough ride. At the end of the 1960s, so-called beat clubs were started up in Moscow, and they immediately found themselves banned by officials, because of the difficulty in controlling the precipitous growth in electric guitars, basement bands, and thousands of fans.<sup>96</sup> By instituting a certain degree of control, the state started to establish groups under the rubric of VIA (*Vokal'no-instrumental'nyi ansambl'*, or vocal-instrumental groups), which performed songs composed by members of the Union of Soviet Composers, under the oversight of artistic committees that were composed of Party officials, censors, and ideologues.<sup>97</sup>

In East Germany, the government tried mightily to prevent the spread of rock and roll, because in its view dancing to such music represented “our degeneration at the hands of the American way of life,” and there was in force a limit, by percentage, on the public play of music from the West vis-à-vis music from the East. Removal of free-

<sup>93</sup> Ramet, *Rocking the State*, 9.

<sup>94</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 21.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–25.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>97</sup> Bright, “Soviet Crusade Against Pop,” *Popular Music*, vol. 5, Continuity and Change (1985), 124.

doms, in the case of rock and roll and elsewhere, led to a flouting of authority and to the flourishing of an illegal market in records, dance clubs, and rock groups, rendering the government's efforts to keep rock and roll under control even more difficult.<sup>98</sup> In their endeavors to keep rock and roll under complete state control, the Ministry of Culture in East Berlin founded a "Sektion Rockmusik" to supervise it. After 1962, provisional government relaxations ensued in relation to rock and roll, and thus, in 1965, the state music publishing house put out a Beatles record, although in that same year, at a Party plenum, rock and roll was officially forbidden in the German Democratic Republic.<sup>99</sup> The tactic of "hot-and-cold" by the East German authorities invariably produced situations like what happened in Leipzig in 1965, when 25,000 young people held a "beat demonstration" against repressive measures in the musical sphere, which had been effected by the imprisonment of several of the participants and their sentencing to forced labor.<sup>100</sup>

Because of bans and aggravating circumstances involved with its development, the quality of rock and roll in Eastern Europe was at a low level, with the exceptions of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, with regard to jazz. Still, some achievements leap out at us, especially those from Yugoslavia. In the desire to maintain Yugoslavia as a "special case," with a "special path to socialism," one sees in the Yugoslav media of the time (and also in publications from ex-Yugoslavia that deal with the phenomenon of rock and roll between East and West), precious few important historical turning points connected with the history of rock and roll in the East. Not in the history of rock and roll in Yugoslavia, nor in the parts of books treating mass culture of that period, is there any mention, for instance, of the fact that in tightly-controlled East Germany an album of hits by the Beatles came out in 1965; or that 92 percent of young people in Budapest in 1969 had attended at least one rock and roll concert; or that the Polish state agency for concert bookings organized a concert by the Rolling Stones in Warsaw in 1967.<sup>101</sup> Although rock and roll in Yugoslavia did have

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<sup>98</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 184–185.

<sup>99</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 5, 239.

<sup>100</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 216.

<sup>101</sup> R. Vučetić, "Rokenrol na Zapadu Istoka—slučaj Džuboks", *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju*, 13, 1–3 (2007), 86.



a preferred status in the socialist era, Yugoslavia had to wait until June 1976 for its Rolling Stones concert; two of them were held that year in Zagreb, in front of 16,000 guests.<sup>102</sup>

## ROCK AND ROLL IN YUGOSLAVIA

Starting in the early 1950s, while rock and roll was exciting and upsetting the world, it began its rapid march, faster than any epidemic, across all the continents. Yugoslavia certainly did not remain immune to its powerful influence; it was, after all, a country that had been oriented at first to Italian and French hits. The first traces of rock and roll in the Yugoslav space are observable in the year 1956: as music for fairground merry-go-rounds, stars of American new music such as Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Paul Anka, and others could be heard.<sup>103</sup> Whether by accident or not, it is unmistakable that it was then that rock burst forth in all milieu of the society, since merry-go-rounds were just as much of a rural as an urban phenomenon. Even then, it was possible to follow the travels of rock-and-roll-stars, and the Party newspaper, *Borba*, ran an article in 1956 about the king of rock and roll, Elvis Presley.<sup>104</sup> That same year, Ivo Robić sang “Shake, Rattle and Roll,” and Bojan Adamič and his jazz orchestra did a version of “Rock Around the Clock”; in 1957, the young Karlo Metikoš (better known later in life as Matt Collins) performed hits by Fats Domino, Little Richard, and Jerry Lee Louis, while in Belgrade the legendary Mile Lojpur, obsessed with Elvis and Bill Haley, made his first appearance in Belgrade.<sup>105</sup>

The king of rock and roll, Elvis Presley, whose career the Yugoslav people had been following since the 1950s, made his appearance on the official Yugoslav market in 1960, with a Jugoton release containing the hits “Don’t Be Cruel,” “I Want You, I Need You, I Love You,” “Hound Dog,” and “My Baby Left Me.”<sup>106</sup> In that same year, the Yugoslav press

<sup>102</sup> Ivačković, *The Rolling Stones*, 83.

<sup>103</sup> Žikić, *Fatalni ringišpil*, 26.

<sup>104</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 473.

<sup>105</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 38–39; Luković, *Bolja prošlost*, 47; Raković, *Rokenrol u Jugoslaviji*, 212–216.

<sup>106</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 48.

reported on Elvis as the “idol of modern times,” although he was also, as the king of rock and roll, described as a “howler.”<sup>107</sup>

Beginning in 1960, rock and roll began to make itself felt more in the public sphere, and it garnered first more attention, and then genuine euphoria. Listeners sought ways to hear this music more frequently, either on the radio, on records, or from jukeboxes. Radio Beograd carried out a survey in 1961 to select the most popular singer. Votes came in from 10,376 listeners, and of the top ten most popular singers, eight were from America, with Pat Boone listed as number one. The Yugoslav singer, who was then a mega-star, Đorđe Marjanović, only placed eleventh.<sup>108</sup> The proclivity for American jazz and rock musicians was again in evidence in a survey from 1965, according to which Yugoslav youth listened to Nat King Cole, Pat Boone, Ray Charles, Billie Holliday, and Chubby Checker, more than anyone else.<sup>109</sup> This shows that even the most beloved balladeers and crooners of that era, such as Charles Aznavour, Rocco Granata, or Rita Pavone, who toured Yugoslavia in the 1960s, had to take a backseat to the invasion of the new sound and the new music.

Examination of the remakes and covers of foreign music at the end of the 1950s and outset of the 1960s gives a picture of the popularity of American rock and roll hits. Thus, the Zagreb group 4M covered Paul Anka's hit “Diana” and The Platters' “The Great Pretender” in 1959. Miki Jevremović remade Anka's song “Crazy Love,” while the group Bijele strijele (the White Arrows) redid the big American hit “The Wanderer” in 1962; two years later, Matt Collins sang the massive hit “Peggy Sue” by Buddy Holly.<sup>110</sup>

Rock and roll consolidated its position steadily until the middle of the 1960s, although “The Twist” had already been the clear favorite at the start of the decade. This new music began spreading inexorably around the world in 1959, when two songs by Chubby Checker, “The Twist” (1960) and “Let's Twist Again” (1961) set off a gen-

<sup>107</sup> “Prisli se vraća kući,” *Ilustrovana politika*, March 22, 1960, 29.

<sup>108</sup> “Najpopularniji pevači,” *Ilustrovana politika*, June 27, 1961, 21.

<sup>109</sup> Skrzypek, “The Political, Cultural, and Social Views of Yugoslav Youth,” 101–102.

<sup>110</sup> CD 1—Estrada susreće rock'n'roll: Zappleši twist!, 6—CD box: *Kad je rock bio mlad. Priča sa Istočne strane (1956–1970)*, Croatia Records, 2005.

erally “twist-o-mania.”<sup>111</sup> In 1961 in Zagreb, groups like Sjene (The Shadows), Bijele strijele (the White Arrows), and Bezimeni (the No-Names) were playing “The Twist.” Reading the packaging on singles released at that time points out the great popularity of the dance, along with numerous variations of songs about the twist. One photograph in particular confirms the omnipresence of the twist: a picture from a reformatory in 1962, in which the inmates are listening to a band play nothing other than—the twist!<sup>112</sup>

A long list of singers of popular music had their interpretations of the twist: Đorđe Marjanović, Radmila Karaklajić (“Inviting You to Twist” and “Selena Twist”),<sup>113</sup> Beti Jurković (“Paganini twist”),<sup>114</sup> Tereza Kesovija (“Time to Twist”), Arsen Dedić (a remake of Chubby Checker’s song “Do the Twist”).<sup>115</sup> In addition to the many borrowings of American twist numbers, there were also some singers who put a local imprint onto the music, such as Mile Lojpur, who did “The Šumadija Twist.”<sup>116</sup> Local variants of the twist were also found in the instrumental songs of the ensemble of the composer Alfi Kabiljo of Zagreb: “Oriental Twist”<sup>117</sup> and “The Zagreb Twist.”<sup>118</sup>

It was the great energy brought by the twist, as well as the growing energy of the powerful rock and roll movement, that led to the formation of the first rock bands in 1961: Sjene, Bijele strijele, Bezimeni, and Roboti (the Robots) from Zagreb, Uragani (the Hurricanes) from Rijeka, and Iskre (the Sparks) and Siluete (the Silhouettes) from Belgrade.<sup>119</sup> The popularity of this new music was not, to be sure, lost on the authorities. Shortly after the creation of the first bands in 1962, an analysis of the Ideological Commission of the CC

<sup>111</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 27.

<sup>112</sup> Photograph no. 100, in: Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 209.

<sup>113</sup> Radmila Karaklajić, “Poziv na tvist” and “Selena tvist,” PGP RTB, EP 50230.

<sup>114</sup> Beti Jurković, “Paganini twist,” Jugoton, EPY-3252, 1963.

<sup>115</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 31–32.

<sup>116</sup> Lučić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do twista*, 113.

<sup>117</sup> CD 3—Doba električara: instrumentalni rok 2, six-CD box: *Kad je rock bio mlad. Priča sa Istočne strane (1956–1970)*, Croatia Records, 2005.

<sup>118</sup> CD 4—Doba električara: instrumentalni rok 3, six-CD box: *Kad je rock bio mlad. Priča sa Istočne strane (1956–1970)*, Croatia Records, 2005.

<sup>119</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bi mlad*, 32–33; Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 23–24.

of the LCY noted that the younger generation was more interested in the twist than in economic development.<sup>120</sup> But, perhaps because this was just the “soft” variant of rock and roll, there was no fear of the authorities, not even in the Soviet Union, where Party officials stated that “Of course [the twist] is silly, and this kind of music is for idiots, but let them cut up—there’s nothing terrible about it.”<sup>121</sup> Probably in line with this “directive,” Walter Ulbricht, the first secretary of the CC of the German Democratic Republic, also allowed the liberalization of East German attitudes toward the twist; the same thing happened in the upper levels of the Czechoslovak Party.<sup>122</sup> Legends about the twist were all over the place, and they included stories of stars and statesmen from all over the world dancing the twist; there were even descriptions of Khrushchev dancing to this kind of music, even though in his famous speech on the arts in 1963 he referred to the twist as “pure obscenity, some kind of mania, and who the hell knows what it’s all about?”<sup>123</sup> His behavior, as in the case of jazz, carried a certain message: people would be allowed to adopt some things from the West, but it would always be the government that determined when, how, how much, and whence; and that the government could change its mind about any of this.

While the first half of the 1960s featured mostly the twist and lighter rock and roll, the second half saw rock with a “harder” sound. This was the period of the so-called electricians (electric guitar players) and a beat inspired by American and British groups (above all, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones). Rock musician Vladimir Janković Džet described the atmosphere in Belgrade in 1964 thus:

The reins were already pretty loose but they fell apart; life was changing right in front of people’s eyes . . . Behavior, dress, music, and all the other activities young people are involved in started to escape the control of the “*kulturträger*.” Getting abroad and then coming back were no longer just hypothetical con-

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<sup>120</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 475.

<sup>121</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 26.

<sup>122</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 29, 50.

<sup>123</sup> “World: Of Firs, Files & Fears,” *Time*, March 22, 1963, <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,896654,00.html> .

structs; and products from other countries started to flood the capital. Jeans, t-shirts, jackets in the latest style and cut, these all became everyday things and the physiognomy of the street underwent drastic change.<sup>124</sup>

Along with listening to rock and roll, people were dancing everywhere at this time: in schools, university buildings, houses of culture, but also in the intimacy of their own apartments or houses, to tunes from the radio or record player, and also in clubs and discotheques that were opening up all over the country. The popularity of this new music was such that one young professor from the vicinity of the small Serbian city of Kraljevo, who had taken his pupils on an excursion to Belgrade, decided, against prevailing custom, not to take them to the theater or a ballet but instead to a concert by the rock groups Siluete, Elipse (the Elipses), and Crni biseri (the Black Pearls).<sup>125</sup>

As rock and roll expanded, records turned into “the most valuable thing in the world” for its devotees. At first not everyone was able to get them. Sometimes they would turn up in secondhand stores, in inconspicuous quantities and in a meager selection, with the best and most hotly sought records often being brought back from abroad by athletes and others who were able to travel.<sup>126</sup> The atmosphere in Yugoslavia, especially in urban areas, showed that Westernization was well advanced. Since these were the years of economic reform, which, naturally, required support from the West, this kind of Westernization was more than welcome to the authorities. The favorable inclination toward jazz, rock and roll, and the twist represented, however, the “more affordable price” for the good offices of Washington and the other Western centers—more affordable than making substantive ideological appeasement or permissiveness. In addition to the records arriving from the West, sometimes even in the luggage of communist politicians, whose children were also growing up with rock and roll, more and more albums from Yugoslav record companies were crop-

<sup>124</sup> V. Janković Džet, “You really got me (Jurili ga mi),” in *Beograd seždesetih godina XX veka*, ed. Bojan Kovačević (Belgrade, 2003), 236.

<sup>125</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 140.

<sup>126</sup> Simjanović, *Kako sam postao (i pretao) da budem roker*, 33.

ping up; by the end of the 1950s, they were already releasing hit records by American and British groups.

Realizing the considerable effects of rock and roll, and the growing demand for records in Yugoslavia, the United States decided in 1958 to expand the IMG program; this had been signed with Yugoslavia in 1952 but now it was broadened to apply to records as well as printed materials and films. That same year, the American reading room in Belgrade offered the company “Jugoslovenska knjiga” the right to import gramophone records from the United States worth \$40,000.<sup>127</sup> A contract on good terms, which made it possible to acquire published items and films for dinars in the short term, was now applied to records, and this was done—certainly not by chance—in precisely the same year that NATO analysts caught on to the power and potential of rock and roll. In the early 1960s, however, despite all of these trends—ranging from smuggling, to the domestic record industry, to direct American assistance—it was still not easy to get one’s hands on the desired records.

In Yugoslavia there existed, at that time, three official corporations that produced gramophone records: Jugoton from Zagreb, the production unit for gramophone records of Radio-TV Belgrade (known as PGP RTB), and Diskos from Aleksandrovac. Jugoton and PGP RTB released their first rock and roll singles under license at the start of the 1960s. Jugoton released “Let’s Twist Again” by Chubby Checker and PGP RTB did the same song by Johnny Hallyday. A giant step in the promotion of rock and roll in Yugoslavia was the conclusion of arrangements by Jugoton with the American giant RCA (Radio Corporation of America), after which several singles by Elvis Presley hit the Yugoslav market.<sup>128</sup> The next major agreement was between Jugoton and EMI (Electric and Musical Industries), signed in January 1967. Thanks to this arrangement, the Zagreb publishing house Jugoton had sole rights to release records from EMI’s repertory in Eastern Europe and the USSR, which meant that records were going to be produced in Zagreb containing the biggest hits of popular music from America,

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<sup>127</sup> AJ, 559-92-216, Uvoz gramofonskih ploča iz SAD po IMG programu, Belgrade, December 8, 1958.

<sup>128</sup> Trifunović, *Vibracije*, 96-100.

Italy, West Germany, and Spain<sup>129</sup>; thus, only four months after the world premiere of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, this album was also published in Yugoslavia. With speed similar to Jugoton's, PGP RTB also released the debut album of Jimi Hendrix, *Are You Experienced*.<sup>130</sup>

Aside from licensed recordings, of which there were ever more, due to the efforts primarily of Jugoton and PGP RTB, the inhabitants of Yugoslavia grew richer in 1968 with the arrival of one more aspect of record availability. In that year, an ad for the publishing house "Mladinska knjiga" announced that it now had a special service for ordering records from abroad and among the first records offered were those by Tom Jones, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Donovan, and Cliff Richards.<sup>131</sup> The most recent hits became accessible in part thanks to the magazine *Džuboks* (Jukebox), which began including from its tenth issue a folio record as a gift.<sup>132</sup> While young people in the USSR took great risks and secretly copied rock and roll onto *samizdat* discs, those in Yugoslavia had access to folio records containing hits from around the world at magazine stands, even in the most remote corners of the country. Jugoton made the records that were distributed through *Džuboks*, so these were artists who recorded for EMI. This kind of gift accompanying the magazine was a function of popularizing rock and roll; it represented a marketing innovation and introduced the Yugoslavs to a marketing practice that was common in the West.

In the conditions from which it was possible, from radio, gramophone, and the jukebox, to hear the biggest and most recent global hits, and in which rock and roll was becoming a part of everyday life, it was no wonder that the number of rock and roll groups grew exponentially. According to an article in *Mladost*, there were approximately 1,000 "electric" groups in Yugoslavia in 1964, and the number continued to grow year after year.<sup>133</sup> In Belgrade, the most popular bands were Siluete, Elipse, Crni biseri, Zlatni dečaci (the Golden Boys),

<sup>129</sup> "Aranžman Jugotona sa Emi," *Politika*, January 24, 1967, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Trifunović, *Vibracije*, 102.

<sup>131</sup> *Džuboks*, no. 25, 3 May 1968, 13.

<sup>132</sup> These records were small and made of a special plastic, on which music was recorded only on one side.

<sup>133</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 146.



Džentlmeni (the Gentlemen), Iskre (the Sparks), Panteri (the Panthers), Samonikli (the Perennials), Smeli (the Daredevils), among others. In Zagreb, the most popular groups were Bijele strijele, Bezi-meni, Roboti, Uragani, Kristali (the Crystals), Crveni koralji (Red Corals), and Grupa 220 (Group 220), while in Split, Delfini (the Dolphins) were popular. The group Indexi (the Indices) dominated the Sarajevo scene, and Kameleoni (the Chameleons) were big in Ljubljana, while among the bands from Skopje the best known were the No-Names and the Pearls.<sup>134</sup>

The names of bands were frequently translations of the names of foreign groups, and it was similar with nicknames or regular names of rock musicians. Behind the Western variant of the name Matt Collins lurked Karlo Metikoš, a singer who had successfully interpreted songs by Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Fats Domino, and who had crafted an international career for himself. His Americanized name, Matt Collins, was chosen at random by just opening the New York telephone directory.<sup>135</sup> Vlada Janković got the nickname Jett after Jett Harris of the Shadows.<sup>136</sup> Models, of course, were not just revealed through names. Melodies and appearances were copied. The Silhouettes began their career performing compositions by Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Cliff Richard.<sup>137</sup> Some people's role model was Elvis, for others it was Little Richard, and for others yet it was the Beatles or the Rolling Stones, but by the end of the 1960s the dominant idols were Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison, and Jimi Hendrix. As hippie culture was on the rise, Zagreb's Grupa 220, wearing flowered shirts and with curly hair hanging down over their faces, interpreted their bitter and austere lyrics in the style of Bob Dylan. While pop music idols were found in Italian, French, and Mexican hit artists, for rock and roll the role models were exclusively Anglo-Saxon, and therefore rock and roll in Yugoslavia was one of the most obvious aspects of its Westernization.

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<sup>134</sup> For more on this subject, see: Janjatić, *Ilustrovana YU rok enciklopedija 1960–1997*.

<sup>135</sup> Škarica, *Kad je rok bio mlad*, 64.

<sup>136</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 37.

<sup>137</sup> Simjanović, *Kako sam postao (i pretao) da budem roker*, 47.



## THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ROCK AND ROLL

Not long after the first sounds of rock and roll emerged from basements, apartments, and houses across Yugoslavia, this kind of music began to be instrumentalized and take its place in the frameworks that made possible its supervision. Recognizing the power of rock and roll, the state “opened the doors” of radio and television to it, state publishing houses starting producing albums of international hits, as well as records by Yugoslav rockers, and the first magazines specializing in this kind of music hit the market. Domestic rock quickly emerged into public view from out of its semi-legal status, and rock concerts became part of the programming of houses of culture and various state—and even Party—demonstrations. Research conducted in 1966 showed that 96 percent of young people listened to popular music. The government must also have found one additional statistic instructive: 86 percent of workers also listened to either this kind of music or that of the “electricians.”<sup>138</sup> Old forms of public gatherings for young people (field trips following the “paths of the revolution,” Party schools, reveilles on May 1, volunteer labor brigades) were slowly decaying, and the new generations were demanding their own space on their own terms. Thus rock and roll, controlled to the extent possible, was something that the government needed.

In accepting rockers, the Yugoslav authorities, as in the majority of other issues connected with American and Western influences, emerged as winners in several ways. In the sphere of domestic politics, rock reduced the potential causes for disaffection among young people, while in foreign policy the West received another demonstration of how Yugoslavia had a good ear for Western values; it also reminded the East that socialism could be preserved, and elaborated, on Yugoslavia’s own terms. Rockers became, more quickly and easily than jazz musicians, a politically acceptable phenomenon, and an important part of daily life, probably because their “target group” was numerically more significant.

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<sup>138</sup> IAB, fond GK SKS Beograd, K-528, Omladina i neka aktuelna pitanja—dokumentacioni materijal prikupljen ispitivanjem među omladinom Beograda, December 1966.

In the process of the popularization of rock and roll, as in the case of jazz, the role of radio was decisive. All across Yugoslavia, young people were tuned in to Radio Luxembourg and the Voice of America; they knew the most recent hits, followed the top-ten lists and the careers of rock stars, and they were in the know about the companies that manufactured the latest electric guitars and drums. By 1961, Yugoslavia got its first radio show that was dedicated entirely to rock and roll—*Sastanak u 9:05* (*Appointment at 9:05*), which was hosted by Nikola Karaklajić, who was Belgrade's first disc jockey, the editor of *Džuboks*, and a man who did for the promotion of rock and roll in Yugoslavia what Willis Conover did for jazz in Europe. The further spread of rock and roll, on programs of Radio Belgrade, continued into 1966, when the show *Prijatelj zvezda* (*Friend of the Stars*) kicked off, and in 1968, with *Veče uz radio* (*Evening at the Radio*).<sup>139</sup>

In this decade, rock and roll conquered the most powerful medium, television, with the cult favorite about Yugoslav rock and roll called *Koncert za ljudi mladi svet* (*Concert for a Crazy Young World*); it started its run in January 1967.<sup>140</sup> This show had around 10 million viewers, in the day when there only existed one television channel.<sup>141</sup> All the major Yugoslav rock musicians passed through *Concert*. A video was also shown there, with Crni biseri singing “Wild Thing” while riding in a train passing through a tunnel. When this video, which resembled a snippet from an American action movie, was shown at festivals around Europe, it was often accompanied by remarks to this effect: “There you have it—see what those lunatics behind the Iron Curtain can do!”<sup>142</sup>

There was also a video by Siluete that was filmed for *Concert for a Crazy Young World* using “the language of film,” which resembled an American Western, and in which a gun battle with revolvers unfolded in the midst of a ghost town.<sup>143</sup> Clearly it was the task of this show to point out, from the position of the regime, that rock and roll was present everywhere and to introduce young people to new heroes (who

<sup>139</sup> Žikić, *Fatalni ringišpil*, 107–108.

<sup>140</sup> *TV novosti*, no. 108, January 21–27, 1967, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Žikić, *Fatalni ringišpil*, 111.

<sup>142</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 227–228.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k10bfjpQCP8&feature=related>.

were, as it would turn out, strictly watched heroes), but also to offer a kind of confirmation that the government had decided to support rock and roll by all available means, with the unavoidable oversight, of course. As further confirmation of the support of the system for rock and roll, and also the support of rock and roll for the system, one can consider the closing credits to the *Concert* show: an instrumental rendition of the youth brigade song “Off to the Railroad, Off to the Railroad” as performed by the Zlatni dečaci.<sup>144</sup> Those closing credits also hint at the amount of deep consideration the regime was giving to the use of rock and roll for its own purposes. Aware of its inexorable force, Party functionaries employed means in the control of rock and roll that did not directly betoken restrictions or censorship—rockers were permitted to rehearse and perform on property belonging to the youth organizations or the party, they could make recordings and receive big royalties, they could appear in the press, and ultimately, that most powerful medium of all stood at their disposal: television. The message delivered by this medium, in a show like *Concert*, was that no one had anything against “Wild Thing,” for example but also that people should not write off songs like “Off to the Railroad.”

The large wave of rock-and-roll groups invariably necessitated specialized musical magazines, something that was a well-established practice in the West, and these publications made their way onto the market in Yugoslavia starting in 1962. The first such specialized magazine, *Ritam* (*Rhythm*), was published in Novi Sad (1962–1965) as a “review of jazz and popular music.” In Croatia, *Plavi vjesnik* (*Blue Messenger*) was published, containing many articles devoted to new musical trends, while popular music was closely tracked in Zagreb’s *Pop Express* (1969–1970) and Belgrade’s *Gong* (1966–1968), but also in *Džuboks* (1966–1969), which was the first magazine in the communist world dedicated exclusively to rock and roll.<sup>145</sup>

In its day, the cult favorite *Džuboks*, which is still a bit of legendary nostalgia for several generations, appeared in color editions and contained numerous articles and photos from the Western press (above all from the most popular music magazine in Britain, *New Musical*

<sup>144</sup> Žikić, *Fatalni ringispil*, 116.

<sup>145</sup> For more on Jukebox, see: Vučetić, “*Džuboks* (Jukebox)—the First Rock’n’roll Magazine in Socialist Yugoslavia,” 145–64.

*Express*), as well as reporting on domestic rock and roll. The adoption of texts and photographs from the foreign press was not unheard of in Yugoslavia. In the analyses of the Ideological Commission of the CC of the LCY, we see that even at the start of the 1960s, the observation was made that entertainment publications derived much of their material from foreign sources, especially the West, and that this amounted in some cases to over 80 percent of the copy in these publications.<sup>146</sup> The covers of *Džuboks* were printed in color, and the posters and records given away as freebies to readers were meant to suggest Yugoslavia's sophistication and show both East and West a special version of Yugoslav modernity, openness, and liberalism.<sup>147</sup>

Evidence of the popularity of rock, and the need for music magazines, is provided by the fact that the entire print run of the first issue of *Džuboks* (100,000 copies) sold out in less than twenty days. By way of comparison, youth magazines published in Yugoslavia (in the seven university centers plus Maribor), for a total of 150,000 students, had, altogether, a total print run of 85,000.<sup>148</sup> The reason for the small print runs of these publications was, probably, their standardized editorial concept; typically they took no notice of the real needs of young people, but rather carried speeches from various meetings of student organizations or party congresses.

The pro-Western editorial policies of *Džuboks* were in evidence on almost every page of this magazine. From the first issue forward, they ran musical bestseller lists, so that Yugoslav readers had access, week after week, to countdowns of the top hits from America, Great Britain, France, and Italy. Later, *Džuboks* expanded its lists to include the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and Brazil, and in several issues there were even lists from the Philippines and Singapore.<sup>149</sup> The only thing that never appeared in *Džuboks* was a chart of hits from Eastern Europe. Parallel to the lists from around the world there was also a Yugoslav greatest hits list, which was meant to assert—seeing as how

<sup>146</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b-(166), K-9, Izvod iz materijala i zapisnika komisije za ideološki rad CK SKJ: O nekim vidovima stranog uticaja u našoj zemlji, June 1, 1962.

<sup>147</sup> Vučetić, "Džuboks (Jukebox)," 148–149.

<sup>148</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b (132–146), K8.

<sup>149</sup> For instance, see the *Džuboks* of April 3, 1969 (p. 21).

the Yugoslav lists matched up almost completely with those from the West—to which portion of the polarized world both Yugoslav rock musicians and Yugoslav young people belonged.

West European radio stations regularly advertised in *Džuboks*, listing their frequencies and the exact schedule of when they would be broadcasting popular music. In addition to informing readers about these programs, *Džuboks* also went one step further, glorifying one radio station to which other East European countries were not favorably disposed. This was Radio Luxembourg, described as a station “that broadcast pleasing, unified, and upbeat programs, which bring lively sounds into the dreary colors of everyday life.” Readers also learned from the same article that the English-language portions of the programming were the most popular in Yugoslavia, and that there were about 100 such shows per week.<sup>150</sup> This approach to foreign radio stations was radically different from that of other East European countries. The Soviet authorities knew that they could not prohibit people from listening to those stations, for that would mean admitting that the regime feared Western cultural infiltration, so they instead employed their own state media outlets to engage in vigorous attacks on the West.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to the calling cards of Western radio stations, Western music magazines such as *New Musical Express* and *Rave* also ran advertisements. Readers of *Džuboks* knew that *New Musical Express* came out every Friday with a run of 600,000 copies, but what was more important was that there were 4,000 subscribers in Yugoslavia. It was even possible to subscribe to this magazine, as to other Western publications through the official company “Jugoslovenska knjiga.”<sup>152</sup>

Western influences were also visible on the covers of *Džuboks*, with its color photos of the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Donovan, the Mamas and the Papas, Sonny and Cher, Cliff Richard, and so on. But, they were also evident in the interviews with leading American and British stars, in articles on their lives, in the lyrics published in English, and in their musical arrangements. Since contemporaries report that, in those days, only a small number of Yugoslav rock fans

<sup>150</sup> “Radio Luksemburg,” *Džuboks*, no. 19, November 3, 1967, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 33–34.

<sup>152</sup> “Mali leksikon,” *Džuboks*, no. 3, July 3, 1966, 15.

knew English, these components contributed to a notable rise in the level of domestic rock and roll.

In a situation like this, did there exist any possibility that some other kind of music might compete with rock and roll from the West? Naturally, the answer is no. As Sabrina Ramet has written, in that day and age no one in Yugoslavia listened to Soviet rock and roll, Soviet rock records were impossible to find, and the majority of Yugoslav young people were unable to list even a single Soviet rock group.<sup>153</sup>

The subversive power of rock and roll, and its potential danger to the system, even if channeled, was mitigated, and then turned around to work for the system—by the system itself. When rock fans, or “rockers” as they were called, first appeared, the establishment considered them “howlers” who “were trying to mimic the decadent idols of the West, and then they were considered an exotic phenomenon, inherent to young people.” Very quickly, however, various functionaries in the youth organizations saw that rock and roll could serve as a means to make political points, and so many public discussions on politics were followed by performances of rock groups. In return, musicians got space to rehearse, in town halls, scouting houses, or local houses of culture. These activities brought credibility to the organizations, which were seen as capable of delivering young people to meetings.<sup>154</sup>

The authorities were conscious that there was little space for young people and “for their cultural and recreational lives,” and also that “a group of electric guitar players [had appeared] that represented a kind of cultural movement,” and one with clear Western influence.<sup>155</sup> And yet, not for one moment was rock and roll seen as a problem that was necessary to combat. All that was lacking was something spectacular that would lead to rock’s total acceptance. And that “spectacle” occurred in January 1966, when the first *Gitarijada* (guitar festival) was held in Belgrade. It was the first large-scale competition of rock and roll groups anywhere in Yugoslavia. The event, in which sixty groups took part, drew 10,000 to 15,000 young fans, and this alone represented a completely new phenomenon. The listeners swayed to the new

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<sup>153</sup> Ramet, “Making the Scene in Yugoslavia,” in *Rocking the State*, 107.

<sup>154</sup> Janković Džet, “You really got me (Jurili ga mi),” 222–224.

<sup>155</sup> IAB, fond GK SKS Beograd, K-209, Mladi u savremenim društvenim zbivanjima—Neka pitanja i problemi omladine Beograda, October 1966.

rhythm, and young men, naked to the waist, carried young women on their shoulders. The screaming and hair-pulling was reminiscent of any number of Beatles' concerts. The mass nature of the event agitated the public, but it also impelled the government to subject it to serious analysis. The question was asked whether events of this type were useful or harmful to young people. Even the CC of the LCS took up the issue of the *Gitarijada*, but the whole thing was eventually transferred to the CC of the League of Youth of Serbia, which in turn relinquished the "problem of the *Gitarijada*" to the City Committee of the League of Youth, which in the political sense meant assigning it the lowest order of importance. But of course the city youth organization surely did not autonomously and without a "signal" from above treat the new aspirations of young people with such complete understanding.<sup>156</sup>

With that, rock and roll finally emerged as a politically validated and institutionalized phenomenon of everyday life. In analyses of the Ideological Commission of the City Committee, the *Gitarijada* was tracked as part of the rise of rock and roll, and interest was shown in the attitude of the public toward it, while the open search was on for the best position for the part itself to take. "Comrades from the police say that the *Gitarijada* is decadent and that commercial interests form the basis for its organization . . . This 'intolerance' toward young people is of an explicitly political character." That the government knew which side to come down on is evident in other analyses, in which it is noted ironically that "for some people, this musical question is tantamount to the question of the fate of socialism." In these documents it is also the opponents of *Gitarijada*, not the festival, who are deserving of censure.<sup>157</sup>

The massive number of people who attended *Gitarijada*, as well as the political acceptance of the festival and of rock and roll, brought about a situation in which on May 3, 1966, at the newspaper stands of a socialist country, the first issue of the rock magazine *Džuboks* appeared, with a photograph of the Rolling Stones on its cover. In the opinion of one of the editors of this magazine, Nikola Karaklajić, the politicians were proceeding wisely, not intervening in this new form

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Nikola Karaklajić, Belgrade, March 23, 2007.

<sup>157</sup> IAB, GK SKS Beograd, K-209, Mladi u savremenim društvenim zbivanjima—Neka pitanja i problemi omladine Beograda, October 1966.



of entertainment and “permitting young people to have fun.”<sup>158</sup> As Sabrina Ramet observed, “the authorities had come to a conclusion: if rock music could not be suppressed, then it had to be made to work for socialism.”<sup>159</sup>

It was easier to maintain control over young people who avoided the “underground” scene, illegal clubs, and the black market in records, and to allow for everything to be transparent. This openness, accompanied by the endorsement of the regime, served to create and promote a positive image of Yugoslavia, as was the case with other cases of indulgent policy.

In addition, the experiences of East European countries in which rock and roll was condemned, discredited, and sometimes even banned, which led to bitter conflicts with young people, let it be known which paths were not to be traveled. In East Germany, there were, for instance, demonstrations of youth in favor of rock and roll that turned into demonstrations against the system, with slogans such as “We don’t want Ulbricht, we want rock and roll.”<sup>160</sup> A similar trend continued in the following decade—in 1977, in Czechoslovakia, after rock concerts were canceled, heated showdowns took place between rock fans and the army, and two months later unrest erupted in East Berlin, which ended in the death of four policemen and ten rock enthusiasts.<sup>161</sup> The need to demonstrate liberalization to the West, and even more so, the fear that conflicts over rock would assume other forms of protest, created a situation in which everything was possible in Yugoslavia, at least as far as popular music went. As the director of the show *Concert for a Crazy Young World* observed, “you couldn’t go out into Terazije Square and shout ‘Down with the Government!’ but you could do almost anything else, and you got paid for it.”<sup>162</sup> Confronted after the break with Stalin with the necessity, for security from the foreign-policy perspective and stability from the domestic perspective,

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<sup>158</sup> Interview with Nikola Karaklajić, Belgrade, March 23, 2007.

<sup>159</sup> Ramet, “Rock: The Music of Revolution (and Conformity),” in *Rocking the State*, 8.

<sup>160</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 195–198.

<sup>161</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 5.

<sup>162</sup> Žikić, *Fatalni ringišpil*, 79.



of unceasingly compromising on this issue or that issue, the regime simply decided that relaxation was not to be a sign of weakness.

Besides the powerful influence that rock and roll had on the construction of the image of liberal socialism, there existed for the regime an additional motivation for deploying it: it was a means of keeping young people under control. Although rebellion lies at the heart of rock and roll, allowing that facet of entertainment to be in the open, and accessible to everyone, the regime actually succeeded in circumventing a rebellion by the Yugoslav rock crowd. The practice of self-censorship among Yugoslav artists certainly contributed to this. By not challenging the regime with outright resistance and revolt, and by choosing its themes carefully (above all, love), Yugoslav rock musicians secured political suitability for themselves, as well as cover photos on popular magazines, the production of records, and the organization of paid concerts around the country.

Rock and roll musicians presented themselves from time to time as exemplary members of society explicitly, through their interviews, but also by their choice of subjects to write and sing about; perhaps this was in part because they were getting more than they expected. Zlatni dečaci recorded a melody from Swan Lake, something that proved to some rockers that the system had succeeded in channeling rock and roll. It was, however, precisely this melody, "Swan Lake," that in the rock and roll version by Zlatni dečaci became one of the metaphors for communism in Yugoslavia. A mix of the peak achievements of Soviet classical music, which came in handy for the USSR as the perfect export to the outside world and perfect proof of its high culture; and rock and roll, one of the most typical products and exports of American mass culture, which Americans, for their part, used as propaganda, fell on the most fertile ground imaginable in Yugoslavia. Tchaikovsky and rock and roll in a musical variant, and East and West in a political variant that buttressed the lives of Yugoslavs—these were the hallmarks of both domestic and diplomatic policy in Yugoslavia from 1948 to the breakup of the country.

Compromises on both sides, by the rockers and the authorities, permitted both groups to be satisfied. Perhaps it was the opportunities to play for official institutions and organizations, or to make records at state studios, or to be broadcast on radio and television—but Yugoslav rock and roll musicians did not express insurgency toward the

social system in their songs. This was, of course, usually endemic to rock and roll. In addition, playing for the state, even if just in local organizations, was lucrative, because in most cases the honoraria were paid out immediately, “by hand,” sidestepping tax obligations.<sup>163</sup> By being active in rock and roll, many musicians earned considerably more than average in Yugoslavia. Drago Mlinarec, of Grupa 220, made two to three times as much as people with advanced degrees, and many rockers brought in more than even engineers or doctors.<sup>164</sup> Another illustrative example is the case of the guitarist for Crni biseri, who managed to pull down, for one evening, two and a half times the monthly pay of his father, who at the time was the vice president of the Belgrade city council.<sup>165</sup> This practice was at considerable variance to Soviet practices. There, only musicians who were members of official concert associations could be paid for giving shows, and they had to present their repertory in advance to a so-called artistic council, which evaluated their musical, moral, and ideological suitability. That is why only The Singing Guitars from Leningrad and The Jolly Kids from Moscow stood out as “professional groups,” while all the others were given the label “amateur” which meant that they could not be paid.<sup>166</sup> Given the access to the media, the support of the state for holding concerts and making recordings, and the lavish honoraria, it is no wonder that some musicians dedicated songs to Tito.<sup>167</sup> Although the Yugoslav regime presented itself as liberal, representatives of “elite culture” (writers, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, composers) competed with each other to demonstrate their loyalty. It is possible that, in recording songs about Tito, the rock musicians also wanted to show that same kind of loyalty, but it is also possible that that was their route to admission to “recognized culture.”

<sup>163</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 60, 70.

<sup>164</sup> Raković, *Rokenrol u Jugoslaviji 1956–1968*, 349, 360.

<sup>165</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 272.

<sup>166</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 28.

<sup>167</sup> The song compilation *To majka više ne rađa*, released in 2006, represented just a small selection of the recorded works dedicated to Tito, among them songs by rock and pop musicians. For more on the patriotic songs of Yugoslav rock musicians, see: Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 131–132.

Performing for Tito, or playing in his honor, became commonplace in the lives of Yugoslav rockers. In 1967, a combination that was inconceivable to people beyond the Iron Curtain was formed: Youth Day, youth clubs, Tito's birthday, and rock and roll. Of course, all lyrics marked for performance had to undergo a rigorous check. But even more bizarre were the sound checks, because the performers were told to "not to make things hard, but easy and soft."<sup>168</sup> Nonetheless, contemporaries recall that both the music and the masses of people avoided state controls, and the young people comported themselves—despite the presence of Tito (who was then celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday), his wife Jovanka, and other high state functionaries—amid the sounds of "hard" music the same way they would at any other rock concert. And, as it usually transpired in this tacit arrangement between the regime and the rock musicians—everyone came away happy. The young people who danced to rock music felt free, the musicians took home sizable paychecks and developed working relationships with all manner of youth clubs and veterans' clubs around the country, "because the fact that we had played for Marshal Tito was enough to make the officers shut up and open the doors to their precious buildings for rock and roll. And we knew how to take advantage of that fact."<sup>169</sup>

Therefore, it is no surprise that the members of the group Elipse singled this out in an interview as their favorite experience:

We were presented with an opportunity of the kind every musician like us desires. We played in front of Comrade Tito, in a friendly atmosphere one evening in a youth club, when it was his birthday. On that occasion we were way more nervous than usual, but we ended up playing well and were happy with it. That will certainly continue to be our best shared experience.<sup>170</sup>

In addition to the manipulation of its own rock performers, the Yugoslav authorities were also able to derive benefit for themselves and the system by making use of individual American musicians, such as Joan Baez, on their visits to Yugoslavia. This particular star of American

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<sup>168</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 231.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 231–232.

<sup>170</sup> "Usponi: Elipse," *Džuboks*, no. 3, July 3, 1966, 6.

protest music was an ideal guest for Yugoslavia, for in the second half of the 1960s she was at the peak of her popularity, and, as the Yugoslav ambassador in Washington stressed in a telegram, “she was known in many circles of progressive youth, the Civil Rights movement, and as a fighter for progress; she protested against the Vietnam War.”<sup>171</sup> Following a recommendation like that, Joan Baez was accorded space in all Yugoslav media. Her songs, filled with protest, were also characteristic of Bob Dylan’s repertoire, and they surely had an impact on young people in Yugoslavia, even though those youngsters, thanks to Yugoslav rock and roll, had had little direct experience of political involvement in their music. These homegrown “closely-watched rockers” seldom allowed themselves to wander into any kind of politicization that could be used to oppose the system that gave them so much. One of the few instances of protest rock poetry was the song “1966” by Ivica Percl, but it was directed against the Vietnam War, and therefore it was acceptable, or even welcome, because of the degree to which it corresponded to Yugoslav foreign policy.<sup>172</sup>

The Yugoslav rock scene had to wait until the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s for rebellion. New groups and artists appeared then, such as Duško Trifunović, Marko Brecelj, Buldožer, Pankrti, Paraf, Prljavo kazalište, Šarlo akrobata, Idoli, Električni orgazam, Pekinška patka and the legendary Džoni Štulić, followed by many others.

### HOW ROCK AND ROLL CHANGED LIFE IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Albums, top lists, dances, magazines, dedicated radio and television shows, posters, and all kinds of other things that were in the service of rock and roll—as well as the music itself—not only modeled musical conditions and won Yugoslavia kudos for the politically acceptable self-portrait it was putting together, but they also had an impact on the general social climate. Fashions changed, as did the appearance of

<sup>171</sup> DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1966, F-175, 414338, Vašington, Telegram no. 370, April 12, 1966.

<sup>172</sup> Ivica Percl, “1966,” CD six—Beat Goes On 2, six CD box: *Kad je rock bio mlad. Priča sa Istočne strane (1956–1970)*, Croatia Records, 2005.

young people, and their habits changed, their way of spending their free time changed, and also their concepts of fun, their artistic tastes, and their foreign-language abilities.

The constant demand for new space for dancing led to the opening of the first “disco club,” or discotheque, in Yugoslavia in April 1967; it was described in newspaper reports as being “like the clubs that one can find in New York, London, Paris, and Rome.” As Lazar Šećerović, one of its initiators, recalls, it was the “first disco anywhere between Trieste and Vladivostok.”<sup>173</sup> To judge from this description, this disco was up to world standards—it had a little cabin for the DJ, a dance floor, lots of mirrors and reflectors, and specially designed furniture. The walls were painted green and red, and the speakers produced sound “unlike anything ever heard in Belgrade.” That this disco fit the international model can also be seen in the fact that the club owners subscribed to a service delivering five new records per week from Paris and London, even before they became big hits.<sup>174</sup> It was in this disco that the inhabitants of Belgrade first had the chance to hear “Sgt. Pepper” by the Beatles and “Hey Joe” by Jimi Hendrix. Many international stars who performed in Belgrade on their tours paid a visit to this disco; this included Julie Christie, Judy Dench, James Mason, among others. That analysis by NATO strategists, to the effect that young people would read less Marx and Lenin if they listened to rock and roll was upheld by the example of this night club: the son of one military officer sold Marx’s *Capital* and related books so that he could afford to buy regular admission tickets to the disco.<sup>175</sup>

Rock and roll also changed both fashion and the appearance of young people. By the middle of the 1960s, they had begun to dress flamboyantly. One new thing was long hair for men, which, more than any other thing connected with rock, upset society and led to innumerable discussions about whether people were for or against “mop-heads.” The new looks sported by the youth of the country not only broke the stereotype of how a young person should look under socialism, but they also impinged on some traditional values. Newspapers were full of examples of people’s reluctance to accept long-haired

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Lazar Šećerović, Belgrade, November 20, 2008.

<sup>174</sup> “Događaj meseca—naš prvi klub diskoteka,” *Džuboks*, no. 15, July 3, 1967, 2.

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Lazar Šećerović, Belgrade, November 20, 2008.

boys. Since wearing one's hair long had the character of a "social ill," cases were often noted of punishments meted out by professors to "longhairs."<sup>176</sup> There were also cases of classic discrimination. One bus driver refused to allow an art history student to board his bus, "on the principle that he did not transport male riders with long hair."<sup>177</sup> And yet, however conservative individuals might react to long hair, they turned out to have more understanding for this new notion; "long-hairs" like these were playing and singing to Tito himself.

Rock and roll culture also brought changes to people's rooms, or to the corners of their houses and apartments that young people had at their disposal. One thing that was important here was another of *Džuboks's* innovations: free posters. In issue after issue, starting in October 1968, readers found free posters of the most celebrated American and British rock groups and singers of both genders. This practice differed considerably from what was going on in the USSR, because there photos and posters of international rock stars were a genuine rarity, and people even "borrowed" them from each other so that they could at least enjoy them for a few days.<sup>178</sup> Thanks to these posters, young people's living spaces in the gray socialist world were animated by colorful posters of singers from around the world, and they looked more or less like the rooms of their American and British contemporaries.

Rock's breakthrough also strengthened interest in learning English. This dovetailed with the general policy of the "redirection" of public education away from learning Russian and toward the English language; this had been one of the upshots of the break with Moscow in 1948. In fact, immediately after the liberation of the country, from 1945 to 1949, Russian was a mandatory subject in schools in Belgrade. The 1949–1950 school year was the last one where there was no choice but to take Russian. The very next year, the government adopted the Resolution on Equal Learning, which allowed the choice of one of four foreign languages.<sup>179</sup> By 1950–1951, 39 percent of pupils were choosing Russian and only 11 percent English, but a decade later,

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<sup>176</sup> *Student*, October 14, 1969, 11.

<sup>177</sup> *Večernje novosti*, September 4, 1969, 7.

<sup>178</sup> Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 25.

<sup>179</sup> The relevant languages were English, German, French, and Russian.

in 1960–1961, the data for elementary schools show 30.4 percent for English and only 4.5 percent for Russian.<sup>180</sup>

Since the 1950s, the world's biggest hits were being sung in English. Singers, for the most part, had no idea what they were singing, because they did not know English, and the lyrics were “pulled” from records and the radio. Many words were pronounced incorrectly and this clouded the meaning of the originals. Over time, because of the publication of the lyrics in the original English, along with musical arrangements in popular magazines, rock and roll was raised to a higher level, and the rock musicians, like their fans, started to acquire good skills in English—some of them decidedly so.

Writing on music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Timothy Ryback posed the question of what the Soviet authorities could have done to prevent young people from tuning in to Radio Luxembourg or Radio Free Europe in the privacy of their rooms, or from giving half a month's pay to acquire a Beatles record on the black market.<sup>181</sup> And while Soviet authorities, and the governments of other East European countries weighed whether or not something could be undertaken in this regard, the Yugoslav authorities did not allow this to become a dilemma. By accepting jazz and rock, by supporting and financing the making of records, opening discos, organizing jazz and rock concerts, and allowing these musical trends to have access to the media, the Yugoslav authorities exercised sophisticated control over youth, but they simultaneously allowed young people to be part of two worlds: the Eastern and Western. By dint of radio, records, jukeboxes, and concerts, rock culture was spreading across the entire country. Every individual, and every musician, even in the smallest rural communities, could get his or her hands on records, lyrics, and musical arrangements of the biggest hits in the world, and Yugoslav rockers got the same treatment as rockers from the West—with equal space and air time in the media and also by becoming part of the establishment.

Ultimately, the general atmosphere created by jazz and rock and roll, particularly in the large cities, made the young people of that era different. Their idols were no longer the heroes of the war of national

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<sup>180</sup> IAB, fond GK SKS Beograd, Informacija o učenju stranih jezika u beogradskim školama.

<sup>181</sup> Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, 5.

liberation, but rock musicians such as John Lennon, Mick Jagger, Jim Morrison, and Jimi Hendrix, and their rooms in the gray socialist world were perked up by posters, with music seeping out of record players, radios, televisions, jukeboxes, discotheques, and concerts, all making it possible for them to feel more free.

Even with the overall political openness on the part of the state toward jazz and rock, along with the institutionalization of this music, society in Yugoslavia did not, of course, change as much as the West desired. Its ideology remained untouched, and the regime continued to set limits on human rights and freedoms. But both jazz and rock and roll, in addition to many other elements of daily life, influenced the formation of pro-Western views and attitudes among several generations.

One of the fundamental ideas of Yugoslav communists after 1948 was “Both East and West,” and in terms of music this was accompanied by the premise that the “Kozaračko kolo” and Woody Herman could go together, as could “Off to the Railway” and “Wild Thing,” or *Capital* and *Džuboks*, and Lenin and Mick Jagger. All things considered, the doors swung wide open for jazz and rock not only because of the feeling that they were cultural values or phenomena of the contemporary world that enriched the lives of the average person, but also because of pragmatism and day-to-day necessity. Pragmatism and day-to-day needs in Yugoslavia, and in America, did, however, change Yugoslav society in the long run, and the worldview of Yugoslavia’s inhabitants, after Louis Armstrong visited Belgrade, after the jazz festivals and *Concert for a Crazy Young World* and the *Gitarijada* and rock and roll à la Yugoslavia—this worldview was changed forever.



## CHAPTER 3

# Modernism and the Avant-Garde in the Struggle for Socialism

In the Americanization of Yugoslav culture, popular culture was—because it was directed at broad sections of the population and target groups desirable for their political influence—in the center of such process in quantitative terms, but Americanization did not avoid the spheres of high culture. The term “high culture” is difficult to define, since the twentieth century was a time when the differences between these two cultural streams were frequently erased. An additional exacerbating factor in defining high culture is that high art, like popular art, rarely manifests itself “in abstract purity,” and so individual forms of art, like jazz, film, or pop art, cannot be put into just one suitable category.<sup>1</sup>

What makes defining American high culture even more difficult is the fact that Europe usually looked down on it with disdain and considered it a copy of European culture, not realizing that since World War II the Paris art scene had decamped for New York, as well as that American institutions, such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Guggenheim Foundation, began to work on the Americanization of European culture, which contributes to the great changes in the conceptualization of art in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hauser, *Sociologija umetnosti*, 2, 97–100.

<sup>2</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 166–167; Stephan, “A Special German Case of Cultural Americanization,” in *The Americanization of Europe*, 75–78.

In the wish to see American culture affirmed at the global level, the State Department saw one of its goals in the task of showing the world that American reality was formed not just by Disney, Hollywood, and chewing gum, but also by high culture.<sup>3</sup> In carrying out this task, America quickly filled its “Cold War display window” with new products, as effective indicators of the existence of high culture—modernism, abstract expressionism, experimental theater. Although aware that people in the majority of Western countries did not understand modernism and the avant-garde, the United States offered them as a complete contrast to Stalinist and socialist-realist art.<sup>4</sup>

The very act of defining the concept of “avant-garde” brings with it difficulties similar to those that exist in defining “culture” and “high culture.” Although the term “avant-garde” first appeared in the nineteenth century, when it was borrowed from military terminology,<sup>5</sup> it was taken up for use in the world of artists by the beginning of the twentieth century. Since then, the avant-garde has gone through various phases—from Russian painters, via Dadaists, Futurists, and Surrealists, to the neo-avant-garde of the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> The theoretician of the avant-garde Renato Poggioli, researching the historical, social, philosophical, and artistic aspects of the avant-garde, maintains that adherents of the avant-garde do share certain mutual values, which manifest themselves, inter alia, in opposition to received values and conformity.<sup>7</sup> Because of the wide range of directions it encompasses, theoreticians, inspired by Peter Burger and his book *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, make distinctions between the “historical” avant-garde (the period up to the Second World War) and the “neo-avant-garde,” which comprises the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, and into which fall, for instance, experimental theater, pop-art, and the music of John Cage.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 542.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>5</sup> Avant-garde is derived from the French words *avant* (in front) and *garde* (guard), meaning vanguard troops or scouts.

<sup>6</sup> Mitrović, *Angažovano i lepo*.

<sup>7</sup> Poggioli, *Teorija avangardne umetnosti*.

<sup>8</sup> H. van den Berg, “On the Historiographic Distinction Between Historical and Neo-Avant-Garde,” *Avant-Garde/Neo-Avant-Garde* (Amsterdam and New York, 2005), 63–64.

Although the concept *avant-garde* is adequate for defining new directions in theater, because it is a collective designation for a series of extremely heterogeneous kinds of theater in the twentieth century, all of which were in opposition to bourgeois theater and its hallmarks (sets as illusion and realism, closed dramaturgy, and psychologically conceptualized characters<sup>9</sup>), the dilemma remains about whether this term can be applied to painting. It is possible that the terms modernism and neo-avant-garde would be more precise, but then again maybe not in the Yugoslav case, where one cannot speak of the neo-avant-garde in art only after the 1970s.

Because of the difficulties occasioned by the whole set of definitions and distinctions along the continuum of modernism-avant-garde-neo-avant-garde, I primarily use the term *avant-garde* in the same way that Piotr Piotrowski did in his book on painting in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1989.<sup>10</sup> *Avant-garde*, therefore, is used here, but not as a designation for specific currents in painting or theater, but to describe various innovative phenomena over and against existing ones; that is to say, it is understood to be an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of artists and artistic directions that run counter to established forms of artistic life and prevailing creative standards and dogmas. This book thus also treats, as “*avant-garde*” in relation to the extant in art, abstract expressionism, pop art, happenings, and experimental theater and music.

In examining art in the second half of the twentieth century, we see that America offered quite a lot to Europe, despite the burden of being viewed as a nation with an “undeveloped” culture—the literature of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Jack Kerouac, J.D. Salinger, and Henry Miller; the dramas of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams and the *avant-garde* theater of Living Theater and La Mama; the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock, Franz Klein, and Willem de Kooning, and the pop art of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein; the opera *Porgy and Bess*, the musical *Hair*, the Metropolitan Opera, the concerts of Arthur Rubinstein, and also the *avant-garde* music of John Cage. Aware of the fact that it had something to offer to Europe

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<sup>9</sup> See Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre, 1892–1992*.

<sup>10</sup> Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, 9.

even when it was a matter of high culture, America made intensive use of these things during the Cold War, against its ideological enemy, but also in the much more global process of the Americanization of Europe, altering the deep-rooted opinion of America culture as “undeveloped” and turning its values into values that a “civilized and cultured” European would admire.

Therefore, some aspects of “high culture” are exceptionally interesting for the study of the process of Americanization and American cultural propaganda, but also for the study of the relationship of the Yugoslav government with modernism and the avant-garde on the one hand and with Yugoslav artists on the other.

The fact that the CIA had one of the leading roles in spreading American culture outside the U.S. borders indicates the level of the ideological and political in American cultural diplomacy.<sup>11</sup>

The organization of concerts or exhibitions that were the brain-child of the CIA demonstrates that international intellectual and cultural activities and institutions were not aimed solely at spying, but that they were also directed toward a propagandistic representation of America as a free society, which stands out next to the strictly controlled and censored society of the communist bloc.<sup>12</sup>

In Yugoslav-American relations, each country had its reasons for devoting special attention to high culture. America was Americanizing and changing the cultural and artistic elite of a socialist country by means of high culture, while the communist authorities in Yugoslavia, by not interfering, allowed for the satisfaction of the needs of intellectuals, primarily artists, and, furthermore, by accepting modernism and the avant-garde, they showed the world their broad-mindedness and democratic nature. This is why the utilization of the avant-garde for propaganda purposes takes on such considerable importance in the study of the Americanization of Yugoslav high culture.

The presence of avant-garde currents was one of the specificities of the artistic scene in Josip Broz Tito’s Yugoslavia. By the mid-1950s, modernism and the avant-garde were on the rise in Yugoslavia, and in the 1960s they were regular fixtures in museums and galleries and on

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<sup>11</sup> Stephan, “A Special German Case of Amerikanization,” in *The Americanization of Europe*, 77.

<sup>12</sup> Cockcroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” 150.

stages, at music festivals, and in art journals. The top members of the world avant-garde came to Yugoslavia in the 1960s, largely as part of American Cold War activities but also as part of Yugoslavia's propaganda goals. Manipulation, here as with film, jazz, and rock and roll, was also apparent on the Yugoslav side.

The methods and scope of the manipulation of art and artists on the part of Yugoslav authorities were determined in large measure by changes in Yugoslavia's postwar cultural policies. The conflict with the USSR, judging by the visibility of the turning point, was reflected most swiftly in culture which, since 1944, had been oriented toward Soviet influences and explicit Sovietization. Historians single out, as the most important milestones in this reversal, the talk that Edvard Kardelj gave in the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1949, which had as its basis criticism of the Soviet model and practice. Then there were the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY; December 1949), marked by a softening in the Party leadership toward culture; the exhibition of Petar Lubarda; and the work of the Zagreb group Exat<sup>13</sup> in 1951. These last two signified a break with socialist realism in the fine arts. The paper presented by Miroslav Krleža at the Congress of Yugoslav Writers in 1952 was also significant; titled "On Freedom of Culture," it was a polemic against the assumptions of socialist realism and against Stalin's reference to writers as "engineers of human souls."<sup>14</sup> The most noteworthy and most radical thing about all of this was the cultural and scientific opening up of the country and the readiness to seek out its individual path which, accompanied by unfettered cultural and scientific cooperation with the West, permanently altered the face of socialism in Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup>

That the changes in culture following the rupture with Stalin were deep can be seen in the fact that at the Fifth Congress of the LCY

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<sup>13</sup> Exat is an acronym for Eksperimentalni atelje (Experimental Atelier). This group was active from 1951 to 1956, and its members included I. Picelj, V. Kristl, A. Srnc, B. Rašica, B. Bernardi, Z. Bregovac, V. Zarahović, V. Richter, and Z. Radić. For more information, see Denegri, *Exat 51 i nove tendencije*.

<sup>14</sup> Dimić, *Agitprop*, 255–263; Perišić, *Od Stalijina ka Sartru*, 341–358; Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 49–50.

<sup>15</sup> Perišić, *Od Stalijina ka Sartru*, 341.

in 1948 it was normal to hear Milovan Đilas saying that “through contemporary bourgeois art, all sorts of cubists, surrealists, existentialists, and artists and writers of Picasso’s and Sartre’s ilk have their orgies.”<sup>16</sup> But things were to change quickly after that point, and that very Sartre was no longer “having orgies by means of contemporary art,” but rather was visiting Yugoslavia, as an esteemed guest, in 1956.<sup>17</sup> And Yugoslavs were able to see the “denounced” Picasso at several exhibitions of French painting, as well as at the exhibition of French drawings held in 1967. Along with American literature, which destroyed many sexual taboos (Miller, Updike, Nabokov, Ginsberg, and Kerouac), and which showed that Yugoslavia was no slave to puritanism and was receptive to the newest trends in world literature, books by authors who were off limits to most of the readers behind the Iron Curtain were also published. These included Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. At the beginning of the 1970s, Yugoslavia was the only communist country in which nearly all the works of Solzhenitsyn, at that time an extremely famous dissident, had been printed.<sup>18</sup> George Orwell’s *1984* was also published in 1968 in Ljubljana (and the following year in Belgrade), probably also with the message that the Yugoslav government did not see any similarity between the Big Brother totalitarian regime of and its own reality. Conversely, the works of Milovan Đilas and Mihajlo Mihajlov could not be published, which speaks to the fact that foreign and domestic dissidents did not receive the same treatment.

Modernism and avant-garde in museums, galleries, and concert halls, as well as on the stages of Yugoslav theaters, do not, however, offer a true picture of the relationship of the Yugoslav government to art in the 1960s. The situation in culture, as far as Yugoslav art is concerned, was seething, and the evidence for this is the many “cases” or “affairs” throughout the course of the entire decade that point out the power pressure exerted by the state on artists. Although at first glance it could seem that everything was allowed (and the presence of the avant-garde in art was supposed to attest to this), the pressures on artists,

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Marković, *Beograd, između Istoka i Zapada*, 324.

<sup>17</sup> Popović, *Slavni gosti Srbije*, 48–52.

<sup>18</sup> Puvačić, “Yugoslav Reactions to Solženitsyn,” 297.

particularly after the end of the 1960s, grew ever greater, and this was a period in which the art scene was characterized by many bans.

So how, then, did a society look when modernism and the avant-garde in art were allowed, and welcome, at the level of form, but not at the level of substance?

## Tito as Pop Art Icon

### AMERICAN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM IN YUGOSLAVIA

The presence of America in Yugoslav high culture in the 1960s is readily apparent in the fine arts—in the American exhibitions held in Yugoslavia, in the articles about American art, in art criticism, in the creation of new institutions on the American model, as well as in the works of Yugoslav artists. This was a part of American propaganda, but it was also part and parcel of general trends in the history of art in the second half of the twentieth century. American postwar fine arts became one of the stories connected with America's postwar rise. Before World War II, America did not have a leading role, or great cultural significance, in the visual arts. The total transformation of the situation with American arts and the switch of the artistic center of the West from Paris to New York were underscored by the U.S. growth into the most powerful country in the world.<sup>19</sup> The most influential works of American art originated, in fact, exactly in the period when American pretensions to global political and economic hegemony were developing.

During World War II and in the years immediately following it, a group of artists appeared who were to help make American art into something about which people were curious not just in the United States but also in Europe. They relied on “uncontrolled spontaneity and accidental effects,” and they presented surfaces that seemed “devoid of pictorial events.”<sup>20</sup> The initiator and prime exponent of American abstract expressionism, Jackson Pollock, by rejecting easel and brush, and squeezing out paint from a tube onto canvases that were stretched

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<sup>19</sup> Kozloff, *Izbor tekstova*, 12–13.

<sup>20</sup> Greenberg, *Ogledi o posleratnoj američkoj umetnosti*, 16.

out on the floor (drip painting), carried out his idea about an impulsive method of painting.<sup>21</sup>

The new approach to painting and the new “canons without canons” made abstract expressionism, which, like jazz, was based on freedom of expression and interpretation, into another of the symbols of American freedom, of which the American administration made conscious use. Daring, freedom, and the method of painting pointed to a breadth of ideas and to the way that neither freedom, nor a painting, could be enclosed by a frame/border. The most renowned promoter of abstract expressionism, the long-serving director of New York’s MoMA, Alfred Barr, maintained that abstract art was a synonym for freedom and that the “nonconformity of the modern artist and his love for freedom cannot be tolerated in a monolithic tyranny,” as well as that “modern art is not useful for dictatorial propaganda.” For another kind of propaganda, it was apparently more than welcome. For this reason, President Dwight Eisenhower regarded modern art as a “pillar of freedom” that could play a major role in American foreign policy, and the important cold warrior George Kennan held a similar view.<sup>22</sup>

Because of these characteristics and its potential, new American art, epitomized by abstract expressionism, and subsequently by pop art, became “well-intentioned propaganda for a foreign intelligence service.”<sup>23</sup> As Eva Cockcroft wrote in 1974 in the journal *Artforum*, CIA projects, U.S. information service, and MoMA, in association with certain individuals such as Nelson Rockefeller and Alfred Barr, had as their goal showing the world the superiority of life and art in capitalism. For this facet of propaganda, abstract expressionism proved to be the ideal medium, for it was the perfect contrast to the strictly controlled, narrow, and rigid nature of socialist realism, and it served political goals “as a symbol of political freedom.”<sup>24</sup>

Cognizant of the multifaceted suitability of the “export” of abstract expressionism, the United States Information Agency (USIA), together with the CIA, outlined the preparation of numerous programs

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<sup>21</sup> Šnel, *Leksikon savremene kulture*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 268–272.

<sup>23</sup> Kozloff, *Izbor tekstova*; C. Gair, *The American Counterculture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 79–80.

<sup>24</sup> Cockcroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” 150–154.



that were elaborated by MoMA.<sup>25</sup> This museum was one of the chief promoters of abstract expressionism, and, through it, of the use of contemporary art as a weapon in the Cold War. Its propaganda activity began during World War II, only to culminate in the 1950s and 1960s. The propagandistic role of the museum was not hidden, and in 1956 it was noted that the purpose of the Museum's international program was political—to show, above all to Europe, that America was not a cultural backwater, as the Russians were attempting to show.<sup>26</sup>

Political interests in the realm of the fine arts were not the property of America alone; Yugoslavia had them too, since it also used art for propaganda purposes. The postwar Yugoslav fine arts scene was marked by a quick split with socialist realism, which had been imposed after liberation. The break occurred in 1950/51, with the organization of two events: the *Exhibition of Recent French Art* (spring 1950) and an exhibition of the works of Mića Popović (autumn 1950). In the view of most historians and art historians, however, the most crucial moment was the opening of the exhibition of Petar Lubarda that was held in May 1951.<sup>27</sup> Abstraction, and the split with socialist realism, were both visible as well in Croatia, in the work of the group Exat 51, which was founded in 1951 and which was the earliest to go to bat for the supremacy of abstract art, contemporary visual communications, and the synthesis of all the disciplines within the fine arts.<sup>28</sup> Since it is asserted in a monograph about the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade that “socialist realism underwent a radical interruption in 1951 with the independent exhibition by Petar Lubarda in Belgrade and the appearance of the group Exat 51 in Zagreb,” these two events

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on the use of abstract expressionism as a means of propaganda, and about the connections between the CIA, USIA, and MoMA, see M. Kozloff, “Američko slikarstvo u vreme hladnog rata,” in *Izbor tekstova* (Belgrade, 1986), 11–33; Cockcroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” 150–154; Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 539–567; Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*; Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*.

<sup>26</sup> Cockcroft, “Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,” 150–154.

<sup>27</sup> Denegri, *Pedesete: teme srpske umetnosti*, 31–67; Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 14–16; Dimić, *Agitprop*, 259.

<sup>28</sup> Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 84–85.

can be definitively placed among the Yugoslav milestones of the break with socialist realism.<sup>29</sup>

An additional stimulus to modernism in Yugoslav painting was the founding of the December Group in 1955,<sup>30</sup> which is considered to be the standard-bearer of postwar modernism in Serbian art, so that, by the second half of the 1950s and in the course of the 1960s, two basic ideological currents took shape in the fine arts in Serbia: a modernist one (the main exponent of which was the December Group) and the “triple trend” exemplified by Mediala,<sup>31</sup> Informalism (the “Enformel”<sup>32</sup>) and New Figuration (“Nova figuracija”<sup>33</sup>). One must also count the Croatian groups Gorgona (1959–1966) and New Tendency (active after 1961) as part of the movement of modernism.<sup>34</sup> In Slovenia, two phenomena emerged: the painter and sculptor Karla Bulovec, whose work, displayed in 1954, did not dovetail with the ideological schemes of the prevailing ideology, and Stane Kregar, who was described as the greatest “decadent” among painters.<sup>35</sup>

In this way, during the course of the 1960s, the art of high modernism and abstract painting became completely a part of the cultural political matrix of the Yugoslav type of socialism.<sup>36</sup>

Along with the openness to new artistic directions, the 1960s brought the start-up of new institutions. The Modern Gallery, established in 1958 was the beginning of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), which opened on October 20, 1965. In the same year that

<sup>29</sup> *Muzej savremene umetnosti* (Belgrade, 1983), 38.

<sup>30</sup> The December Group was founded in 1955 and operated until 1960. It included, among its members, S. Čelić, M. Bajić, a Tomašević, L. Vozarević, and M.B. Protić.

<sup>31</sup> The Mediala Group, in which L. Šejka, M. Glavurtić, O. Ivanjicki, S. Vuković, M. Stanković, and V. Radovanović worked, among others, was founded in 1958, but its core members had assembled by 1953/54.

<sup>32</sup> The works of B. Protić, Z. Pavlović, B. Božičković, M. Popović, and Ž. Turinski heralded the appearance of the Belgrade “enformel” at the end of the 1950s.

<sup>33</sup> Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Piotrowsky, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, 179–180; Denegri, *Exat* 51, 193–333.

<sup>35</sup> Gabrič, *Socialistična kulturna revolucija*, 108.

<sup>36</sup> B. Dimitrijević, “DIY-POP: Umetnička radinost Dušana Otaševića,” in *Dušan Otašević: popmodernizam. Retrospektivna izložba 1965–2003* (katalog izložbe) (Belgrade, 2003), 11.

the MCA opened, the journal *Umetnost* (Art) was also started. The Modern Gallery and the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, the Modern Gallery in Ljubljana, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje also worked to promote contemporary art and modernism.<sup>37</sup>

The establishment of the MCA in Belgrade was made possible by the existence of works of contemporary art, but the museum is also of prime importance in studying the phenomenon of Americanization, which became the permanent charge of this museum, built on the model of MoMA, the mission of which was conceptualized by the famous historian of art and curator, Alfred Barr. As one of the key figures in the history of art in the twentieth century, Alfred Barr was known as a “cultural cold warrior,” who, together with the U.S. government, consciously worked to promote and export abstract expressionism for Cold War propaganda purposes.

If the example of the MCA speaks to the multi-faceted adoption of American experience, then the visit of the art historian Miodrag B. Protić to America was decisive for the idea of a permanent mission and the functioning of the new museum. Protić visited the United States in 1962, as a Ford Foundation grantee, and he researched the functioning of museums dedicated to modern art; he met Barr, the founder of the Museum of Modern Art, as well as its contemporary director D’Harnoncourt.<sup>38</sup>

Insight into MoMA operation, as the key American experience, altered Protić’s view of the concept of a museum in the twentieth century; this was one of the indicators of the way American grants and scholarships contributed to the Americanization of recipients and led to the adoption of American models in the most varied domains of art, culture, and science. Following Barr’s and MoMA’s principles, Protić did not conceptualize the mission of the new MCA according to the hackneyed idea of a chronological ordering of arts, but rather he envisioned a thematic distribution. In addition to that kind of division of works, he also “adopted” from New York the very organization of the museum, so that the MCA was the first to establish a section for documentation, and also special services for art education, public relations,

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<sup>37</sup> Denegri, *Šezdesete*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> D’Harnoncourt became the director of the MoMA in 1949.

and international cooperation. And he imported a style of working that implicitly acknowledged “a different, faster tempo” and completely new technology in the preparation and mounting of exhibits.<sup>39</sup>

In a monograph published to accompany the opening of the museum, Protić recognized that the idea of founding the MCA was “as old as contemporary art itself,” but that “it was possible today to do this, in a socialist society.”<sup>40</sup> It was the specific nature of the Yugoslav socialist society which, in contrast to the other socialist societies, allowed it to grasp how much advantage would derive from having contemporary art, and how much contemporary art could help to promote Yugoslavia and buttress its image as a liberal, modern state.

In its first five years of operation, the MCA achieved truly notable results, and its openness to the most recent trends is illustrated by the fact that in its first five years thirty-two international exhibitions were organized at the Museum.<sup>41</sup> Of these, only four were by artists from behind the Iron Curtain: an exhibition of the Soviet sculptor Ernst Neizvestny (1965), an exhibition of contemporary Polish painting (1967), and exhibitions of Czechoslovak contemporary drawing (1968) and František Kupka (1969).<sup>42</sup> And even these rare displays of Soviet and East European art had an ideological justification to go along with their artistic ones. Nikita Khrushchev had directly attacked Neizvestny in his speech against abstract art at Moscow’s Manezh Gallery, describing his works with words such as “insane mish mash”; Polish contemporary art was globally acclaimed, as shown by the exhibition of Polish contemporary art at MoMA in 1961, while the promotion of Czechoslovak art in 1968 and 1969 had a strong political background, for, as with film and theater, it was an act of explicit support of Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring—and even more so after the Soviet intervention.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 527; *Muzej savremene umetnosti* (Belgrade, 1965).

<sup>40</sup> *Muzej savremene umetnosti* (Belgrade, 1965), 4.

<sup>41</sup> The most important of these were *American Pop Art*, *Italian Art Today*, *Pablo Picasso*, *Contemporary German Art*, *English and American Drawings*, *Raoul Dufy*, *Paul Klee*, *The New Direction: The Figure, 1963–1968*, *Contemporary French Painting*, *Juan Miro*, and the like....

<sup>42</sup> *Pet godina Muzeja savremene umetnosti u Beogradu 1965–1970* (Belgrade, 1970), 13.

The founding, but above all the visualization of the new museum, along with the favorable political climate of the 1960s, helped make Yugoslav art relevant in a global framework. On the occasion of the exhibition "Yugoslavia: Contemporary Tendencies," held in America in 1966, *Newsweek* magazine, reporting on creative freedom in Yugoslavia, gave special attention to Belgrade's MCA, and it noted that: "It stands as an ultra-modern monument to artistic freedom. The most provocative and original building ever built in a socialist society . . . With its heart and soul it represents, as one Western observer stated, a modern, cheerful tombstone to socialist realism."<sup>43</sup>

The promotion of modernism, abstract expressionism, and pop art also had, from the Yugoslav perspective, its manipulative tendency, as seen in the efforts to demonstrate the way Yugoslavia, after its parting of ways with Moscow, had gone through great changes, including in relation to art. Along with a display of its desire for esthetic independence, the Yugoslav authorities showed the West that they were institutionalizing modernism and abstraction and that, at the state level, they were cultivating these movements in high culture—which were, incidentally, undesired behind the Iron Curtain. In the occasional assessments of the level of "enlightenment" of Tito's socialism, it was precisely this modernism in the Yugoslav art of this period that had a key role. What was to be gained by supporting the "insane mish mash," as it was considered not just by Khrushchev but also probably by many Yugoslav communists as well, was obvious. The modernization of Yugoslavia in the broadest sense could be skillfully displayed in the benign spaces of esthetics.

The antipathy toward socialist realism and orientation toward modernism were interrupted only once, by Tito's attack on abstract painting in the winter of 1962/63. In fact, at the very end of the 1962 a sudden campaign against "decadent abstract art" began; it coincided with the beginning of attacks on film artists as well. The disquieting tone of the New Year's message, in which the president of the state warned that in literature, and in art in general, there was much that was alien to, and incompatible with, "our socialist ethics," and that

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<sup>43</sup> AJ, 559, F-526, F.J. Blumenfeld, "Sloveni bez Marksa," *Newsweek*, February 7, 1966.

these were “various decadent phenomena imported from outside,” was strengthened by Tito’s words at the Seventh National Youth Congress of Yugoslavia, in which he launched a head-on attack on abstract art, terming it “quasi-art.” Tito said he was wondering “whether our reality does not offer sufficiently rich material for creative artistic work,” and he added that people were “escaping into abstraction, instead of forming our reality.”<sup>44</sup>

Although the reasons for the campaign against abstract art in 1963 have not been laid bare, one should keep in mind that, as in the case of movies and movie bans, the period from 1961 to 1963 was one of cooling in Yugoslav-American relations and a thaw in Yugoslav-Soviet relations. It should also not be forgotten that on the eve of the campaign against abstract art, Tito paid a visit to Khrushchev, and surely Khrushchev’s speech against abstract painting in December 1962 had a great influence on him. In fact, on December 1, 1962, Khrushchev visited the exhibition *Thirty Years of Fine Art* at the Manezh Gallery in Moscow; this was the first public exposition of pictures “of some of the so-called modernists” from the period of Stalinism. Khrushchev asserted at that time that some of the pictures looked like “a child had done his business on the canvas,” and of others he simply uttered: “Phooey.”<sup>45</sup> Khrushchev’s open charge that abstraction and formalism were “one of the facets of bourgeois ideology” and his statement that “the communist Party fights, and will fight, against abstractionism and all other formalistic deformations in art,”<sup>46</sup> evidently made a deep impression upon the Yugoslav president.

It is most likely that Tito was truly offering a small concession to the Soviets by “adopting” Khrushchev’s views on art, thereby avoiding much larger concessions on more serious diplomatic topics. What shows us, however, that Tito’s campaign lacked forcefulness is the fact that nothing decisive then occurred to show that the Party was ready to take decisive steps in a battle against abstract art. This is backed up by the continuation of the construction of the MCA, as well as by

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<sup>44</sup> J.B. Tito, “O intelektualizmu i kvazi-umetnosti (Iz govora na VII kongresu Narodne omladine Jugoslavije, Beograd, 23 januar 1963),” in *O umetnosti, kulturi i nauci* (Subotica, 1968), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 591–592.

<sup>46</sup> “Hruščov o umetnosti,” *NIN*, March 17, 1963, 13.

numerous exhibitions of domestic and foreign “decadent” artists. As with film, it would take another decade for the fine arts to come under real pressure, as would take place at the end of 1973 and the beginning of 1974 with the attacks on the “Black Wave in painting” in the context of increased censorship at the beginning of the 1970s.

### MAJOR AMERICAN EXHIBITIONS

Modernism and abstract art, taken up by Yugoslav artists, and sponsored by the government, had a powerful profile in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s, thanks to a large number of international exhibitions. In the period preceding the break with Moscow, a foreign fine arts presence was notable in the exhibitions of Soviet socialist realists Aleksandar and Sergei Gerasimov, Aleksandr Deyneka, and Arkady Plastov, and in the 1950s and 1960s Yugoslav galleries and museums across the country opened their doors to masterpieces of West European and American painting.<sup>47</sup>

In the process of Americanization of Yugoslav art and culture, American exhibitions were of particular significance. These were the *Exhibition of American Modern Art* (1956), *Contemporary American Art* (1961), *American Abstract Watercolors* (1964), *Exhibition of American Graphic Arts* (1965), *American Pop Art* (1966), *Contemporary American and English Drawings* (1968), and the *Exhibition of the American Poster* (1968), as well as the major American exhibition *New Direction: The Figure, 1963–1968* (1969). Through this chronology of American exhibitions, it is possible to follow Yugoslav-American diplomatic relations as well. The exhibitions were for the most part held on an annual basis,

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<sup>47</sup> The most important exhibitions in this period were the *Exhibition of French Painters* (1950), *Contemporary French Art* (1952), *Le Corbusier and a Selection of Works of Dutch Painting* (1953), *Exhibition of Henry Moore* (1955), *Contemporary Italian Art* (1957), *The Culture and Art of Rubens’ Day—Exhibition of Flemish Art* (1957), *Contemporary French Painting* (1958, 1963, 1968), *Contemporary British Painting* (1965), *Italian Art Today* (1966), *Contemporary Austrian Art* (1966), *Salon de Mai of Paris* (1966, 1969), *Contemporary German Art* (1967), *The Galeria Del Deposito* (1967), *The Exhibition of the Drawings of Marc Chagall* (1967), *The Exhibition of Picasso’s Drawings* (1967), *The Exhibition of Raoul Dufy* (1968), and the *Exhibition of Paul Klee* (1968/69).



and with the participation of major American artists, but the period from 1962 to 1963 does represent an exception—it was a time known for the conflict with America and for Tito's critique of "decadent art" and abstract painting. The chronology of American exhibitions in Yugoslavia is notable from one additional angle as well—namely that these exhibitions were part of a much broader Cold War project of the Museum of Modern Art, and its international program of exhibitions that was established in 1952 for the purpose of promoting American contemporary art abroad.<sup>48</sup>

The first *Exhibition of American Modern Art* in socialist Yugoslavia was held in 1956. It was a part of the large American project Modern Art in the USA, which was understood to be the inaugural exhibition of twelve abstract expressionists in eight European cities, of which Belgrade was the only city with a communist ideology. It was on display, in fact, before reaching Belgrade, in the largest galleries in Europe—in Paris (Musée National d'Art Moderne), Zurich (Kunst Halle), Barcelona (Museo de Art Moderno), Frankfurt (Städtisches Kunstinstitut), London (the Tate Gallery), the Hague (Gemeentemuseum) and Vienna (Wiener Secession); it was on view in Belgrade from July 6–August 6, 1956.<sup>49</sup> Alongside painting, sculpture, and drawings, the Yugoslav public was also presented with artistic photography and contemporary American architecture. Organization of the exhibit was carried out jointly by the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the USIA from the American embassy in Belgrade. The exhibition had more than 6,000 visitors, and the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries judged it to be the "exhibition of the year."<sup>50</sup> That same year, Yugoslavia also hosted the exhibition *Contemporary American Photography*, as part of MoMA's International Program; besides Yugoslavia, this exhibition was loaned out to France, Switzerland, Holland, and Austria.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Saunders, *The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, 267; "Internationally Circulating Exhibitions," <http://www.moma.org/docs/learn/icelist.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> AJ, 559, F-65, Ataše za informacije Američke ambasade Joseph C. Kolarek Marku Ristiću, predsedniku Komisije za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, May 17, 1956.

<sup>50</sup> AJ, 559, F-70a, Izložba savremene američke umetnosti.

<sup>51</sup> "Internationally Circulating Exhibitions," April 9, 2010.



The next crucial American *Exhibition of Contemporary American Art*, was held in Belgrade in 1961, and after that it made the rounds to Skopje, Zagreb, Maribor, Ljubljana, and Rijeka. It contained works by outstanding American artists, with the most numerous among them being representative of abstract expressionism.<sup>52</sup> This exhibition was organized by the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in collaboration with the U.S. embassy in Belgrade.<sup>53</sup> It also, as part of a program of American cultural propaganda, put in an appearance in Europe, on a tour that commenced in Vienna in June 1961, and then saw it move from Belgrade to England and Germany, where the tour concluded in May 1962. An article in the *Art Journal* in 1963 emphasized that the exhibition in Yugoslavia was organized at the request of the Yugoslav authorities, who also had a desire for their efforts dedicated to American abstract expressionism to be seen, showing that Yugoslavia did not always wait for American influences to come knocking on its door but sometimes opened the door to them itself.<sup>54</sup> A photograph of the Modern Gallery in Ljubljana shows the degree to which this exhibition was American, and the degree to which Americanism failed to both the Yugoslav officials: at the entrance to the Gallery, where this exhibition was being held, flew an American flag.

In the context of art and Cold War propaganda, the assessment of the painting of Pollock, Rauschenberg, and Francis, published in the weekly *NIN*, is indicative: “creativity has become a spontaneous act and is fully and completely free, liberated from all tyranny, whether it were to come from the subject, an idea, or even the material.”<sup>55</sup> Mention of the word “freedom,” juxtaposed with the word “tyranny” in fine arts criticism, albeit with a skillfully concealed meaning, is doubtless more than an esthetic judgment. Another review, on the occasion of this exhibition, also spoke of freedom, by means of its assessment that

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<sup>52</sup> Jackson Pollock, Franz Klein, Mark Toby, Willem de Kooning, Clifford Steel, Sam Francis, Robert Rauschenberg, and Hans Hofman.

<sup>53</sup> AJ, 559, F-200b-2.

<sup>54</sup> J. Donson, “The American Vanguard Exhibitions in Europe,” *Art Journal*, vol. 22, no. 4 (Summer 1963), 242.

<sup>55</sup> L. Trifunović, “Američko slikarstvo,” *NIN*, September 24, 1961, 8.

“the abstract art of our time will owe to American painters some of its greatest freedoms.”<sup>56</sup> The Americans had to be satisfied with this type of reception for the American exhibit, and for American art in general, for it provided Europe, but also a socialist country, once again with the image of a free America, fighting against tyranny.

MoMA exhibition the *American Abstract Watercolor* was displayed in Belgrade in 1964. The exhibition then traveled to Rijeka, Maribor, and Ljubljana, as well as in England, Greece, India, Australia, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand.<sup>57</sup> That same year (July–September 1965), the Belgrade public, also as part of MoMA’s international program, saw the exhibition of Rauschenberg’s illustrations for Dante’s *Inferno*, which was also made available to audiences in England, Austria, West Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Holland, and Belgium.<sup>58</sup>

An *Exhibition of American Graphic Arts*, organized by the American embassy, was held in 1965. The fact that Belgrade had a place on the list of West European capitals, as far as this exhibition was concerned show on which side Yugoslavia stood in the eyes of the USIA. According to reports from the American embassy, the exhibition struck a positive chord, and American satisfaction was heightened by the fact that more than 100,000 visitors saw it.<sup>59</sup> In that same year, *The Intimate World of Lyonel Feininger* was put on in Zagreb and Belgrade; it was an exhibition of one of the most outstanding American artists of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> Once again, with the organization of this exhibition as part of the international program run by MoMA, Yugoslavia made the list of privileged West European states, along with Austria, Sweden, Great Britain, Ireland, and Switzerland.<sup>61</sup> Along with the exhibition *Pop Art Graphic Works* in Zagreb and Bel-

<sup>56</sup> K. Ambrozić, “Izložba američke umetnosti,” *Književne novine*, no. 154, September 22, 1961, 5.

<sup>57</sup> “Internationally Circulating Exhibitions,” April 9, 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1965, F-150, 439884, Vašington, šifrovani telegram br. 1860, November 4, 1965.

<sup>60</sup> *Intimni svet Lyonel Feiningera: izložba akvarela i crteža* (Galerija kulturnog centra Beograda), katalog izložbe (Belgrade, 1965).

<sup>61</sup> “Internationally Circulating Exhibitions.”

grade in 1966, the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb staged, that same year, the *Exhibition of the Drawings of Arshile Gorky*.<sup>62</sup>

An *Exhibition of the American Poster* was held in 1968 in Belgrade's Museum of Applied Arts. The most famous American artists were represented at it, artists who through posters presented the art of abstract expressionism and pop art, like Franz Kline, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, and Robert Rauschenberg, while the works of Roy Lichtenstein garnered special attention.<sup>63</sup> After Belgrade, this exhibition traveled to Zagreb, Ljubljana, Bačka Topola, Banjaluka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Split, and Bitola, and, according to reporting in *Pregled*, the number of visitors in Belgrade exceeded all expectations, causing the exhibition's stay to be prolonged.<sup>64</sup> On account of its great popularity, it made another tour in 1969, allowing the inhabitants of both Rijeka and Šibenik to see it.<sup>65</sup>

The Museum of Contemporary Art held an *Exhibition of Contemporary English and American Graphic Arts* in 1968.<sup>66</sup> The selection of artists was made in such a way as to present the leading tendencies of American painting in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>67</sup> The *Exhibition of American Graphic Arts* was held in Koper, Ljubljana, and Maribor, and visited Zagreb the following year.<sup>68</sup> These presentations of posters and graphic arts, at which were displayed the works of pop art artists as well, came at the time when demonstrations of students and young people were starting to rattle Europe and America. The art of the poster and the power of social protest were epitomized in pop art, and

<sup>62</sup> M. Kadić-Šolman, "Ershile Gorky, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, 21.VI–10.VII 1966," *Republika*, vol. 22, no. 9 (Zagreb 1966), 381.

<sup>63</sup> Denegri, "Američki plakat," *Umetnost*, no. 14 (Belgrade, 1968), 98.

<sup>64</sup> "Izložba plakata," *Pregled*, vol. 11, no. 4, April 1968, 40.

<sup>65</sup> "Američki plakati u Rijeci," *Pregled*, vol. 12, no. 3, March 1969, 41.

<sup>66</sup> "Najveća izložba savremene engleske i američke grafike," *Politika*, May 31, 1968, 10; *Engleska i američka savremena grafika* (od 31. maja do 16. juna 1968), katalog izložbe, MSU (Belgrade, 1968).

<sup>67</sup> These represented the end game of abstract expressionism (Gottlieb, Frankenthaler), neo-Dada (Rauschenberg, Johns, and Dine), pop art (Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Oldenburg, D'Archangelo), as well as the latest directions in the realm of abstraction (Stella, Anushkevich): Denegri, "Savremena američka i engleska grafika," *Umetnost*, no. 15 (Belgrade, 1968), 67–68.

<sup>68</sup> "Izložba američkih grafika," *Pregled*, vol. 12, no. 3, March 1969, 41.

it is possible that they exerted influence on the agitated atmosphere among students across Yugoslavia, which culminated in June 1968, but even if they did not do so, then they were surely a worthy *mise-en-scène* of general protest and rebellion.

The tumultuous decade of the 1960s concluded, as far as American exhibitions are concerned, with the large show *A New Direction: The Figure, 1963–1968*, which was held in January and February of 1969 in the Museum of Contemporary Art. Again on this occasion Belgrade proved to be a strategically important location, because it was the jumping-off point for this European tour. The exhibits included forty-eight works by seventeen artists, and they represented “a different art from what we are used to seeing in our setting,” because its intellectual connective tissue was the human figure, which until then had been “sidelined by the euphoria of abstract art.”<sup>69</sup> A unique curiosity of the exhibition was one of the series of pictures by Warhol of Marilyn Monroe (*Marilyn x 9*).<sup>70</sup> The upshot of this exhibition was the enrichment of the collection of international graphic works at the MCA, for in the end works by Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg, Vasarely, D’Archangelo, and Gottlieb were purchased.<sup>71</sup>

In MoMA’s international program, which succeeded in linking esthetics and politics, Yugoslavia enjoyed a decidedly favored position, and the Yugoslav public, thanks to this program, was a witness to the most recent trends in contemporary American painting, as was the public in the majority of Western Europe. For the entire time that this program existed, it organized only one exhibition in the Soviet Union—the *Exhibition of Pablo Picasso* in Leningrad, and that was only in 1990, followed by Moscow in 1990/91.<sup>72</sup> Even Poland, where modernism had a high profile on its domestic painting scene, seldom appeared on the list of countries where the MoMA exhibitions toured, and the Poles viewed only *American Postwar Architecture* (1957), two exhibitions of American photography, *The Lithographs of Jasper Johns*

<sup>69</sup> *Novi pravac: Figura 1963–1968*, katalog izložbe (Belgrade, 1968), 5.

<sup>70</sup> M.B. Protić, “Nova slika čoveka,” *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 535, February 4, 1969, 42.

<sup>71</sup> *Muzej savremene umetnosti* (Belgrade, 1983, 101); *Pet godina rada Muzeja savremene umetnosti u Beogradu 1965–1970* (Belgrade, 1970, 27–29).

<sup>72</sup> “Internationally Circulating Exhibitions,” April 9, 2010.

(1975), and a show devoted to American silent movies (1975). What Yugoslavs viewed in the 1960s, Poles, like people in the majority of other countries behind the Iron Curtain were only able to see after the fall of communism; the graphic works of Andy Warhol were shown in Czechoslovakia in 1990 and in Poland in 1991.<sup>73</sup>

Along with numerous American and West European exhibitions, several smaller Soviet exhibitions were also organized in the 1960s. An *Exhibition of Soviet Watercolors* was held in the Art Pavilion in 1966. Aware that they were sending this exhibition to a country in which the public was accustomed to works of abstract expressionism and pop art, the Soviets did not insist on including works typical of socialist realism; rather, they offered “the traditional genre for watercolors—lyrical landscapes.” Although “lyrical landscapes” was their insistent term, the titles of individual works nonetheless point to a high degree of ideologization of art: *The Building of the Krasnoyarsk Power Plant*; *Olja, Representative of the President of the Kolkhoz for Cultural Issues*; *At the Erection of the Płaviņas Hydroelectric Plant*; *The Red Crane*; *Woman Kolkhoz Worker with a Red Scarf*.<sup>74</sup> The next year a show called *Young Soviet Painters* (1967) was held in the Gallery of the Graphic Collective. The attitude toward Soviet was painting was evident in the reporting in *Politika*:

Although rare, from time to time our country does hold exhibitions of Soviet art, which offer us the opportunity to find out how art in the USSR is developing and in what directions it is moving. Our understandings of the role of the fine arts, as they have been formulated in Soviet realism, have not changed, but in practical terms within that movement there are certain changes that are not devoid of interest for the chronicler. In the USSR, official art—historical themes—is still cultivated, and it evolves less than other types.<sup>75</sup>

That Yugoslavia was split between West European and American painting, on the one hand, and East European, on the other, can also be seen in the number of foreign exhibitions, and Yugoslav exhibitions

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> *Izložba sovjetskog akvarela*, katalog izložbe (Belgrade, 1966).

<sup>75</sup> P. Vasić, “Mladi sovjetski slikari,” *Politika*, December 23, 1967, 11.

abroad. Contemporary Yugoslav painting was, in fact, shown primarily to the West, while other things were sent eastward: *The Exhibition of Yugoslav Naïve Artists* (to the USSR), *The Exhibition of Copies of Frescoes from the Bogorodica Ljeviška* (to Czechoslovakia), and *The Exhibition of Old Serbian Graphic Arts from the 16th to the 18th Centuries* (to Romania). In addition, the *Exhibition of Contemporary Yugoslav Graphic Art*, held in Bulgaria, set off a kind of scandal when the Bulgarian government and critics expressed anger toward Yugoslavia for including predominantly abstract works in the show.<sup>76</sup>

This division is visible, also, in the example of the discussion carried out in 1965 regarding the selection of paintings for an exhibition in Mongolia. As the painter Krsto Hegedušić accurately noted, “they call us out for splitting artists into two groups, so that the better group can go to the West and the worse one to the East.” Participants in this discussion emphasized that when “a painter gets sent to an exhibition over there [in Mongolia], he rebels immediately about why he didn’t get sent to Paris, or Belgium,” or, as Ljubica Stanimirović precisely formulated the policy of sending painters to the East and to the West: “In my opinion, Belgium is a sophisticated country and you cannot dispatch the same things there as to Mongolia.”<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, a decision was made for drawings from the National Liberation Struggle (NLS) to go to Mongolia. What emerges from this discussion is the relationship of artists to engaged themes and to the NLS as a subject for painting, because it was concluded that with the selection of NLS drawings for the exhibition in Mongolia “both Mongolia and the artistic quality of the National Liberation Struggle were being underestimated.” A further statement from this meeting attests to the fact that Mongolia was really a socialist country and that Yugoslavia considered itself very much above Mongolia: “You know that Mongolia is a socialist country. . . It has Ulan Bator and nothing else.”<sup>78</sup> The general division between Yugoslav art and Yugoslav politics, which is convincingly illustrated by the “Mongolian affair,” was

<sup>76</sup> AJ, 559, F-266a, 1963, Izveštaj Komisije za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom za 1962: likovna umetnost.

<sup>77</sup> AJ, 559, F-407, 1965, Sa sednice Organizacionog odbora Stalne jugoslovenske izložbe savremene jugoslovenske umetnosti, November 3, 1960.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

avoided by the only possible means—frequent, even if nearly impossible, compromises. This was the policy of Janus's double face, which rotated as needed—toward Mongolia in one manner, and toward Belgium in another, as in the majority of cases when Yugoslavia's Janus-like face looked toward America and the West in one direction and toward the USSR and the East in the other. This policy throws up the pressing question of what kind of society was it, really, that sends, simultaneously, pictures from the National Liberation Struggle to the East, and with no little slight, while sending abstract paintings to the West.

A different kind of exhibition from the one in Mongolia was put together in America in 1966. It was called *Yugoslavia: Contemporary Tendencies*. The place was the prestigious Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., after which it traveled to galleries in five American states.<sup>79</sup> On the occasion of this exhibition, the *Washington Post* noted that “artists in Yugoslavia enjoy an atmosphere of freedom and experimentation, completely atypical for countries behind the Iron Curtain”; *Newsweek* recognized, in the paintings of Edo Murtić, “the shrapnel-like explosiveness of the American painters of action, Klein and de Kooning”; the journal *New Republic* stressed that in the art of communist Yugoslavia there was nothing of what one implicitly understands when thinking of communist art, while the director of the Corcoran Gallery underscored that, if Yugoslavia lagged behind the West in terms of artistic trends, then that lag only amounted to two to three years.<sup>80</sup> The very act of opening the exhibition, like the list of invited guests, indicates the importance of art in Yugoslav-American relations—but also the importance of Yugoslavia in American foreign policy. Attending the opening, for example, were the U.S. secretary of state Dean Rusk and his wife, the U.S. representative to the United Nations, the assistant secretary of state for culture, the assistant sec-

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<sup>79</sup> The following artists displayed works at the exhibition, which ran from January 7 to February 13 1966: Stevan Luketić, Drago Tršar, Vojin Bakić, Dušan Džamonja, Edo Murtić, Zlatko Prica, Stojan Čelić, Branko Miljuš, Janez Bernik, Mića Popović, Vladimir Veličković, Oton Gliha, and Mladen Srbinović.

<sup>80</sup> AJ, 559, F-526, F.J. Blumenfeld, “Sloveni bez Marksa,” *Newsweek*, February 7, 1966; DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1966, F-175, 418681.



retary of the treasury, and representatives of the diplomatic corps and prominent journalists.<sup>81</sup>

In analyses of American influence on artists, what emerges as decisive, of course, is the take of art historians, but it is not a disputed point to say that the leading American directions in painting, abstract expressionism and pop art, came to have a place in Yugoslav painting. It has already been noted that American critics singled out Edo Murtić as a painter on whom the influence of Kline and de Kooning was evident. According to *Newsweek*, Murtić, then, was one of the most meritorious artists responsible for the sidelining of socialist realism in Yugoslavia after the rupture with Stalin was this same Murtić, “a Partisan leader well acquainted with bullets and battles,” who, after hanging his rifle back up in its spot on the wall, brought abstract expressionism to Yugoslavia.”<sup>82</sup> This was, apparently, a story of a tried-and-true Party artist, who was allowed, and to whom it was perhaps even suggested, to make use of American experiences and transfer them to Yugoslavia.<sup>83</sup> And Murtić himself said openly that, in the postwar period, what had a decisive influence on him was his trips to the West, to Canada and America in 1948 and, in addition, to France, Austria, and Germany, where he had been given the assignment of designing pavilions in which Yugoslav art exhibitions would be held. It was obvious that his position in the Party and in the state was exceptionally strong, considering that he himself said in 1951 that he traveled “on his own nickel” for one and a half years in America. According to his own reminiscences, this trip enabled him to come to know “artistic freedom” as well as to plumb the depths of the “new and completely free situation in America.” It is indicative that Murtić, speaking to the author of a monograph dedicated to his life and his work relating to his stay in the US, as well as to his influences such as Pollock and de Kooning, constantly repeated the word *freedom*.<sup>84</sup> That word, after all, emerges as a leitmotif in all sectors of Americanization in Yugoslavia, from jazz and film to painting.

<sup>81</sup> “Din Rask na otvaranju izložbe jugoslovenske likovne umetnosti u Vašingtonu,” *Politika*, January 9, 1966, 9.

<sup>82</sup> AJ, 559, F-526, Blumenfeld, “Sloveni bez Marksa.”

<sup>83</sup> Gibson, *Edo Murtić*, 9–17.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–21.



Bringing and transferring American experiences, and with those experiences also the breath of artistic freedoms, Edo Murtić was, by the 1950s, already considered, in the contemporary art world, the most agile advocate of the postwar concept of modernity, and one of the most important dates in the history of modern Yugoslav painting in the 1950s is certainly bound up with his exhibition *The Experience of America*, shown first in Belgrade and then in Zagreb in 1953. More than forty of his pictures that had originated in America in 1951 and 1952 were on display, and they hint at his path toward abstraction and the adaptation of some elements of American abstract expressionism.<sup>85</sup> Both the motifs and the titles of Murtić's works originating in America—the series of paintings *New York* (1952), *Pittsburgh* (1952), and *Highway, Manhattan* (1952)—are further evidence of his fascination with the American continent and the American way of life. Pictures from this cycle represent, in addition, an extremely open and drastic step away from the realism that until that time had been dominant on the canvases of Yugoslav painters; this connoted not only a severing of the relationship with socialist realism but also a literal “flight” in a radically opposed artistic direction, to abstract expressionism. It was a “flight” away from the Soviet model, with its shackles, to a model offering liberty.

### POP ART IN YUGOSLAVIA

Along with abstract expressionism, pop art was the most noteworthy direction in American painting in the second half of the twentieth century. Although it first appeared in England, it was in New York that it turned into a movement, one that in 1963 entered upon a dizzying ascent. For the processes of Americanization and Westernization of Yugoslavia, and indeed of the whole world, the importance of pop art lay in the facts that it was a completely Western phenomenon, born under capitalist conditions, in a technologically highly developed industrial society, and that its programmatic epicenter was America.<sup>86</sup> The critic Lawrence Alloway came up with the idea of pop art, using it to describe a product of mass art in mass media, but not for artistic

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<sup>85</sup> Denegri, *Exat* 51, 58.

<sup>86</sup> Osterwold, *Pop Art*, 6.

works whose sources lay in popular culture, for pop, actually, was more than a direction in painting—it was a wider movement typical of the second half of the 1960s, and applied to music, the new art of posters, the cult of flower children, and the intensifying use of drugs—in other words, it applied to various manifestations of subculture and the underground scene.<sup>87</sup>

The audience for pop art was broad and diverse, which made this form of art into a powerful means of propaganda. In its content and form, it was especially attractive to young people, but in the works of Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Robert Rauschenberg there were elements that were also attractive to the educated public, which took its cues from the standards of high culture.<sup>88</sup> In addition, then, to things that were characteristic of younger generations, but which were also digestible by an elite public, another aspect of pop art is significant in understanding its use for propaganda purposes—the rebellion against authority and established social norms, accompanied by the smashing of traditions and conventions.

The Yugoslav press reported a great deal on pop art in the 1960s. Published in 1964, one of the first articles by a domestic author—“Pop Art” by Dragoš Kalajić—calls attention to how people in Yugoslavia were following the latest world artistic trends and directions, as well as to how well understood they were in the country. The same text demonstrates that in Yugoslavia, in the spirit of world fine art criticism, the works of leading pop art artists such as Lichtenstein, Oldenburg, and Warhol were being analyzed.<sup>89</sup> There is more evidence of this in *Politika*, where a review was published on one of the key pop art exhibitions held at MoMA.<sup>90</sup> The journal *Umetnost* also ran an article that year on pop art.<sup>91</sup> And Lucy Lippard’s book *Pop Art* appeared in

<sup>87</sup> A. Huyssen, “The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of US Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *New German Critique*, no. 4 (Winter 1975), 77.

<sup>88</sup> Hauser, *Sociologija umetnosti*, vol. 2, 169.

<sup>89</sup> D. Kalajić, “Pop-Art,” *Delo*, vol. 10, no. 12, 1964, 1729–1737.

<sup>90</sup> Ž. Turinski, “Šta je u stvari pop-art,” *Politika*, April 3, 1966, 17.

<sup>91</sup> O. Bihalji Merin, “Anti umetnost i nova stvarnost,” *Umetnost*, no. 7 (Belgrade, 1966), 13–26. This text is illustrated by the works of Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, Jim Dine, Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, and George Segal.

Yugoslavia in 1967, only one year after its first publication anywhere.<sup>92</sup> Popular news weeklies also proved susceptible to pop art; *Ilustrovana politika*, for example, which ran stories on pop art frequently in the 1960s, also published people's impressions from pop art exhibitions such as that of Rauschenberg in London.<sup>93</sup>

Although pop art had featured in the press since 1964, a key moment in Yugoslavia for it was the American exhibition *Pop Art Graphic Works*, held in 1966 in Belgrade and Zagreb, at which the Yugoslav public was introduced to the work of the most prominent American pop art artists, such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Mel Ramos, Jim Dine, Allen Jones, Tom Wesselmann, James Rosenquist, and John Wesley. Although it was restricted to graphic works, this exhibition allowed the Yugoslav public to have its first direct contact and acquaintance with pop art.<sup>94</sup>

Analyses of the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture must address the interface between American pop art and Yugoslav art. One of the crucial phenomena in Yugoslav painting in the 1960s was the trend called "new figuration," which resembled pop art.<sup>95</sup> The promoter of this movement was Đorđe Kadijević, who emphasized that "new figuration" originated "in the revolt against the formalism of abstract painting," and so it shared an impetus with American pop art. In the catalogue to the exhibition *New Figuration and the Belgrade Circle*, organized in 1966, it was noted that the artists in this exhibition utilized non-representational materials (metal, wood, fabric, earth, and occasionally whole objects), a technique also characteristic of pop art.<sup>96</sup>

The many articles about pop art and the American exhibitions in Yugoslavia without doubt had an impact on Yugoslav artists. Artists whose creations show the influence of pop art include Dušan Otašević, Dragoš Kalajić, Radomir Reljić, Predrag Nešković, Radomir Damjanović Damjan, Olja Ivanjicki, and the designer Slobodan Mašić.

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<sup>92</sup> *Umetnost*, no. 10 (Belgrade, 1966), 149. A review of this book by Jerko Denegri appeared in *Umetnost*, no. 15, Belgrade, 1968, 115–116.

<sup>93</sup> "Pop-art, umetnost ili prevara," *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 293, June 16, 1964, 28.

<sup>94</sup> I. Subotić, "Američki pop art," *Umetnost*, no. 7, Belgrade, 1966, 125.

<sup>95</sup> Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 118.

<sup>96</sup> *Nova figuracija beogradskog kruga*, katalog izložbe (Belgrade, 1966).

Since analyses of the works of these artists and the tracking of the influence of American pop art on their creations falls into the bailiwick of art historians, here I single out only certain cases that point directly to the presence of pop art and Americanization in individual artists.

Dušan Otašević made his first appearance on the Belgrade art scene in 1965, with an exhibition at the time when pop art was exciting the whole world, and when a great deal was being written about it in Yugoslavia as well.<sup>97</sup> Otašević, like many painters of pop art, distanced himself from traditional currents in painting by linking parts of “banal” or “kitschy” everyday life with his repertory.<sup>98</sup> And Otašević himself underscored a certain pop art influence on his creativity: “My activity began at the time of pop art. A fresh breeze from Americanism was blowing through hidebound Europe, and it was an exceptionally favorable breeze for the ship on which I wanted to sail.”<sup>99</sup>

In addition to the impact of American pop art, the rise of consumer society and the evolution of consumer culture also influenced the development of the Yugoslav variant of this artistic direction. Thus Otašević’s work exhibit evidence of pop art patterns—food and beverage in *Yes, Sir!* (1966), *Eating and Drinking* (1966), and *Cake* (1967); personal hygiene in *Cleanliness Is Half of Good Health, and Uncleanliness Is the Other Half* (1967), *Pure White Otaševićian Suit* (1967), and *Polptych* (1966).<sup>100</sup> For instance, the creations of Claes Oldenburg contain food products, as in *Hamburger on the Floor* (1962), *Oven with Meat* (1962), and *Pastry Case* (1961–1962), as does the work *Shelf with Cakes* (1963) by Wayne Thiebaud. Also toilets, or bathroom culture, can be found in Otašević’s works *Blue Stream Turns Blue/Happy Pisser* (1966) and *Ocean! Ocean!* (1966), and these make the list of pop art’s themes, as attested by Oldenburg’s *Soft Sink* and *Soft Toilet Seat* (1966), as well as by the “bathroom works” of Tom Wesselmann.

When one recalls that pop art, by its very conception, is able to flourish only in highly industrialized societies, then it is logical that the specific nature of Yugoslav socialism also created a specific pop art. Therefore, in Otašević we do not find Warholian icons of modern

<sup>97</sup> Dimitrijević, “DIY-POP: Umetnička radinost Dušana Otaševića.”

<sup>98</sup> Merenik, *Ideološki modeli*, 122; Merenik, “Ikone modernog doba,” 154.

<sup>99</sup> Cited in Denegri, *Šezdesete*, 149.

<sup>100</sup> Dimitrijević, “DIY-POP: Umetnička radinost Dušana Otaševića,” 14.

civilization like Marilyn Monroe or Jackie Kennedy, but there are icons personified, for instance, in the president of the state, Josip Broz Tito (*Comrade Tito, O White Violet, Our Young People All Love You*, 1967), in the icon of revolution, Lenin (*On to Communism, on Lenin's Course*, 1967), or Mao Tse Tung (*Mao Tse Swims to Communism*, 1966). The question remains how, especially when at the end of the 1960s a campaign was launched against artists who critically examined contemporary socialist realities, no criticism emerged of Otašević's ironic and critical views on Tito and the revolution, expressed in the above-cited works.

Another artist whose name is associated with pop art is Olja Ivanjicki, who attentively followed American trends and brought the spirit of America, pop art, and American "happenings" to socialist Yugoslavia. Ivanjicki's behavior, her happenings and her appearances in the media were entirely on the model of the behavior of American pop artists who were appearing in the New York artistic world, with great self-confidence, as media stars.

In tracking the process of Americanization in art, it is significant that Ivanjicki's pop art exhibition was put on in Belgrade just a couple of months after the noted exhibition by Rauschenberg. This exhibition was devoted exclusively to pop art, and the adoption of the American model was observed by the art critic Pavle Vasić, who underscored Rauschenberg's influence on it.<sup>101</sup> In the 1960s, her other important exhibitions included *Pop Art* in Belgrade and Rovinj (1964), *Happening* in Belgrade (1965) and Zagreb (1966), and another show at Lincoln Center in New York (1968).<sup>102</sup>

The American experience certainly had direct influence on Ivanjicki's adoption of American artistic models. She was the first Yugoslav artist to receive a scholarship from the Ford Foundation in 1962, and, while in the United States, she discovered pop art. Her stay in America oriented her toward American culture for good, because, even before Apollo 11 landed on the moon on July 21, 1969, that is to say, even before the outcome of the mission was known, she painted Neil Armstrong in her *Great Journey*, which was a homage to American

<sup>101</sup> P.V., "Izložba Olje Ivanjicki," *Politika*, October 8, 1964, 11.

<sup>102</sup> *Olja Ivanjicki: očekivanje nemogućeg* (Belgrade, 2009), 15.

(counter)culture, the American way of life, and American successes.<sup>103</sup> Along with Armstrong, many other American icons can be found on her canvases—Henry Kissinger in *Kissinger and the Summer, or Ping-Pong Diplomacy* (1972), while *Twentieth Century* (1975) holds images of John Kennedy, Stanley Kubrick, Robert Oppenheimer, Charlie Chaplin, Walt Disney, Muhammad Ali, Neil Armstrong, Marilyn Monroe, Andy Warhol, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.<sup>104</sup>

The fashion of the 1960s encompassed what was called op art. The term “Optical Art” (op art) entered the jargon of art critics and reporters after a 1965 MoMA exhibition titled *The Responsive Eye*, which was supposed to represent a counterweight to the phenomenon of pop art. Croatian artists such as Ivan Picelj and Miroslav Šutej took part in this exhibition, and therefore Yugoslav artists contributed to the promotion of this new artistic direction.<sup>105</sup> Articles in the women’s magazine *Bazaar* show how widespread op art was in Yugoslavia; it had pieces in which women were advised on which op art designs would be good for their wardrobes, and in which there was a description of an exhibition, in central Belgrade, of materials, ceramics, and various other items made “according to the rules of op art.”<sup>106</sup> From such texts we see that op art had become a component part of Yugoslav reality only a year after its “inauguration” at MOMA.

When one takes a broad view of the attitude toward the visual arts in Yugoslavia after the break with socialist realism, especially in the 1960s, it is apparent that the Yugoslav government had no objections in terms of form; what is more, it was favorably disposed toward a wide variety of modern forms, but only as long as the essence, or content, of these works of art did not contradict official, Party-line dogma.

In modernizing the art scene, the Yugoslav system knew how to, and was able to, win political points with the West, and these advantages were easy to see in Yugoslavia. In the fine arts, these gains meant that, in the 1960s, people in Yugoslavia could view the works of Picasso, Chagall, Henry Moore, Van Gogh, but also Pollock, Rau-

<sup>103</sup> S. Lazarević, “Olja slika za Armstronga,” *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 557, July 8, 1969, 25.

<sup>104</sup> *Olja Ivanjicki: očekivanje nemogućeg*, 130.

<sup>105</sup> Denegri, *Exat* 51, 202, 285.

<sup>106</sup> “Volute li op art,” *Bazaar*, vol. 3, no. 39, July 15, 1966, 41.

schenberg, Warhol, and Lichtenstein, something that was a privilege in life under a communist system. The organized purchasing of abstract works on the part of the state also counts as a signal gain, because it guaranteed material security to the representatives of modernism—something that was often absent in Western spaces, because of the exclusive functioning of market forces. The greatest benefit, of historical dimensions, was certainly the construction and opening of the MCA, where the works of Yugoslav artists could be evaluated by critics of the world's leading art journals as well as by the domestic art critics who were operating on a highly developed level. Without Belgrade's break with Moscow, there would probably not have been any Americanization of Yugoslav culture, or it would have proceeded, as in other countries behind the Iron Curtain, along a semilegal track, or even illegally, and without the Americanization of Yugoslav culture, Yugoslav artists would have faced an insurmountable delay in their acceptance and development of trends from the outside world.

Just as abstract expressionism was an indicator not only of a new direction and the evolution of visual arts, but also of American success and the growth of America into a global superpower, so was Americanization and the openness to contemporary West European and American art in Yugoslavia an indicator of both the following of the most recent artistic currents and the direction of Yugoslav foreign policy. By rejecting socialist realism, it's not just that front-end loaders, tractors, and miners' jackhammers disappeared from artists' canvases, but rather that the cruel political system based on labor camps was thrown over, and, by accepting abstract painting and pop art, Yugoslavia was agreeing to become a part of the Western referential system, although only as far as art was concerned.

## American Theater on Yugoslav Stages

The postwar period, as with the visual arts, saw the penetration of contemporary American theater onto European stages. In the America of that time, a new generation of dramatists was at work; at the forefront were Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Edward Albee. Musicals also continued their climb to fame, and in the 1950s the cult classics *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story* originated on Broadway;



and at the end of the 1960s, the American scene was “rattled” by *Hair*.<sup>107</sup> The breakout success of American theater in the 1960s was closely associated with off-Broadway and the emergence of avant-garde and experimental companies, which spread like wildfire first across the United States and then Europe. The 1960s witnessed a revolution occurred in the theater arts, and it disturbed and then completely changed the existing theatrical canon. Logically, America was the place where the revolution could burst forth in full splendor, thanks to artists such as Julian Beck and Judith Malina and their Living Theater, Richard Schechner and his Performance Group, as well as the work of the Bread and Puppet Theatre and other experimental troupes.<sup>108</sup>

As in other realms of activity, especially in culture, the new trends swiftly made their way to Yugoslavia. Theater life in Yugoslavia of the 1960s was, like painting, characterized by the irruption of the modern and the avant-garde. One of the decisive moments for opening of the theater to the modern and the following of world trends was certainly the performance of the play *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett, in Belgrade—first in 1954 and then again in 1956.<sup>109</sup> Individual institutions and daring individuals contributed to modernization and the opening of theater to world trends. When one considers Belgrade alone, there were the outfits Atelje 212 and the Belgrade Drama Theater, and one of the figures who had a decisive influence on the modernization of theater and its inclusion in global currents was Mira Trailović.

The 1960s, when one speaks of mainstream theater, were characterized by growth in the number of American dramatists on Yugoslav stages, with the most popular and most frequently performed being Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Edward Albee. Two key phenomena in connection with the American avant-garde theater in Yugoslavia in the 1960s were the phenomenon of the Belgrade Inter-

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<sup>107</sup> N. Grant, *Istorija pozorišta* (Belgrade, 2006), 164–165.

<sup>108</sup> Suša, “Beogradsko pozorište i studentske demonstracije ’68,” 56.

<sup>109</sup> The premiere took place on December 17, 1956 in the building of the newspaper *Borba*, where the Atelje 212 was located at that time. Before that, a performance of *Waiting for Godot* had occurred in the studio of Mića Popović in the Staro sajmište area of Belgrade.



national Theater Festival (BITEF)<sup>110</sup> and the phenomenon of the musical *Hair*.

Evidence of a major opening to contemporary American dramatic writers is found in the fact that Yugoslavia discovered Miller and Williams at the same time that Europe discovered them. Performance of the works of these writers, in addition to being an indication of the diplomatic orientation of Yugoslavia, also demonstrated the openness to the modern in theater. Their creative works did, in fact, drastically alter people's views about the theater, for their hallmarks were a freer *mise-en-scene*, colloquial speech instead of rhetorical pathos, innovations in the style of acting, provisional scenography instead of old-fashioned illusion.<sup>111</sup>

The breakthrough of American writers in the 1950s signified the golden age of the Belgrade Drama Theater (BDT):

As had happened after the First World War with jazz, all of Europe in those years was crazy about American authors. They introduced us to a new feeling of life and a new rhythm of life, too. It was as if they had come to us from some long-lost paradise, and their stories possessed a simplicity that had long since disappeared from Europe; we loved their short, simple sentences, which did not shrink from banality, the dialogue that implied more than was said openly—all of which made available to us new contact with the fundamental theatrical truths of life.<sup>112</sup>

It is thus no wonder that the years between 1955 and 1961 were completely under the spell of American drama, while the 1960s brought the representative works of leading American writers (Miller and Williams), representatives of American avant-garde theater work (Albee, Schisgal, Kopit, and Gelber) and also experimental theater.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> BITEF was staged every September from 1967 on. The goal of the festival was to demonstrate new tendencies in the realm of scenography and dramatic creativity.

<sup>111</sup> Pašić, *Kako smo čekali*, 12–13.

<sup>112</sup> J. Hristić, "Beogradsko dramsko pozorište i njegove zlatne godine," in *Beogradsko dramsko pozorište 1947–2007*, 127–128.

<sup>113</sup> Čosić, "Američke drame," 226–227.

The revolution in the politics of repertoire, which was actually the abandonment of the sovietization of the theater, was manifested most strikingly at the Belgrade Drama Theater (BDT), which “opted more and more for the production of new dramatic literature by Western authors, among whom Americans dominated numerically and in terms of artistic value.”<sup>114</sup> Thus in the 1950s, of thirty-six foreign plays, twelve were American, and of these, eleven had their Yugoslav premieres on the stage at the BDT.<sup>115</sup>

But incorporating American dramatists was not always easy. According to the recollection of the director of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, putting on this particular play in 1956 provoked the reaction of politicians, as for instance in the case of the summons delivered to him by the politician Dragoslav Draža Marković, which was accompanied by the question, “Good God, man, what are you doing, directing American plays about faggots?”<sup>116</sup> This reaction, however, changed nothing, and American plays continued their conquest of Yugoslav stages. It is interesting to note that the directors themselves did not know much about America, and that they “learned about it straight from the dramas of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.”<sup>117</sup>

When Arthur Miller’s dramas appeared on stage at the BDT in the mid-1950s, it was a further sign of the opening toward “forbidden spaces of intoxicating Western freedom.” Heightening the absurdity of this situation was the fact that the leftist Miller, a “destroyer” of the American dream and American reality, functioned for the Yugoslav system as a propagator of the American dream, but not a critic of its reality.<sup>118</sup>

The popularity of this writer was so great that on the stage of the BDT alone six of his plays were put on by 1970—the first was *Death of a Salesman*, which premiered on December 6, 1951, two years after it premiered on Broadway. Then came *The Crucible* (premiere 1955, two years after its Broadway premiere), *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1958,

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 218–219.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 151, 218–219.

<sup>116</sup> M. Dedić, “Igrali smo na ivici mača,” in *Beogradsko dramsko pozorište 1947–2007*, 135.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ćirilov, *Pre i posle “Kose,”* 2.

three years after Broadway), *A View from the Bridge* (1957, just one year after its world premiere), *After the Fall* (the premiere for this play for all of Europe was at the BDT on October 15, 1964, ten months after the first staging in America), and *Incident at Vichy* (1966, two years after Broadway). All told, Arthur Miller led the pack in terms of critics' reviews, as well as in the number of his works performed in Belgrade up to the year 1970 (of the seven plays, six were shown at the BDT, while the play *The Price* was staged in 1968 at Atelje 212, a mere seven months after its New York opening).<sup>119</sup>

In analyses of the production of works by Arthur Miller, it is worth mentioning that, probably due to his leftist convictions, he was one of the rare American authors whom people were glad to perform in the East, and his 1965 stay in the Soviet Union "for touristic purpose" speaks to his sympathies for the countries behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>120</sup> Miller's convictions were the subject of an investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), and he found himself on the blacklist on account of which he was banned from work in the 1950s in television, radio, and the film industry. Because Broadway remained fairly "immune" to anti-communist bans, his plays ran there without interruption, reaching a level of success and popularity that very quickly transcended the borders of the United States.<sup>121</sup> Miller's political stances certainly had something to do with his being "one of the most outstanding of contemporary dramatists" to the Russians; his play *All My Sons* was translated in the USSR as early as 1948, a mere year after its publication in America.<sup>122</sup> By 1965, some of Miller's works had also been performed in the Soviet Union—*A View from the Bridge*, *Death of a Salesman*, *All My Sons*, *The Crucible*, and *Incident at Vichy*.<sup>123</sup>

It would be hard to confirm whether or not, and by what means, American propaganda made intentional use of Arthur Miller, but he was a part of its activities. Although he was persecuted at one time for his

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<sup>119</sup> Ćosić, "Američke drame."

<sup>120</sup> "Artur Miler u Moskvi," *Politika*, February 2, 1965.

<sup>121</sup> Cauter, *The Dancer Defects*, 205.

<sup>122</sup> Seifert, "From Cold War to Wary Peace," in *The Americanization of Europe*, 194–195.

<sup>123</sup> "Artur Miler u Moskvi," *Politika*, February 2, 1965, 12; S. Lukić, "Moskovska pozorišta ove sezone," *Politika*, April 25, 1965, 19.

leftist convictions, he quickly began to win accolades and prizes from American critics, while also conquering theater stages in Europe. The Americans, by “exporting” Miller despite his criticism of American society, actually “exported” American culture, too, and also American values. The capitalism that was chastised in his dramas was nonetheless still capitalism, which the public, especially that behind the Iron Curtain wanted to see, and it was exactly for that reason that individual Soviet critics accused it of being sophisticated propaganda, since it depicted a bourgeoisie that was perhaps alienated, but was still a bourgeoisie.<sup>124</sup> What’s more, after the period of McCarthyism Miller came to be much appreciated even by the high levels of the U.S. government, as shown by his inclusion among the 156 most famous artists who were invited to attend Kennedy’s inauguration.<sup>125</sup> As a major mediator in the spread of American culture in the lands behind the Iron Curtain, in July 1965 Miller visited Yugoslavia as the president of the world PEN Center.<sup>126</sup>

Analyses of American Cold War propaganda interpret Miller’s appointment as president of the PEN Center as the effect of detente and the need of PEN, with its distinctly anti-Soviet positions, to find a way to expand its influence in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, especially the Soviet Union.<sup>127</sup> Thus Miller, although a critic of U.S. society, supported, in his role as PEN president, the publication of Soviet dissident writers, something that was surely seen to win points for America and its Cold War cultural struggle against the USSR.<sup>128</sup>

The 1960s were also notable for the staging of Edward Albee’s play, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*,<sup>129</sup> which is regarded as one of the most representative works of American dramatic art of that whole decade, and which got the biggest number of reviews among American dramas in Belgrade.<sup>130</sup> Between 1964 and 1970, this drama was

<sup>124</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 208.

<sup>125</sup> Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 345.

<sup>126</sup> The Congress of PEN Clubs was held at Lake Bled in July 1965, under the sponsorship of Josip Broz Tito. Among the 500 participants were Roger Caillois, Eugene Ionesco, Jan Kot, Pablo Neruda. The Soviet Union sent only observers.

<sup>127</sup> Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 364.

<sup>128</sup> Seifert, “From Cold War to Wary Peace,” 195.

<sup>129</sup> The Yugoslav premiere of this play was at Atelje 212 on January 7, 1964. The world premiere had taken place on Broadway on October 13, 1962.

<sup>130</sup> Ćosić, “Američke drame,” 645.

shown 165 times, which is a record for the number of productions of an American drama in Belgrade prior to 1970.<sup>131</sup> These performances also played a certain propaganda role vis-à-vis the USSR, for Atelje 212 traveled to Leningrad and gave guest performances of the show there, which amounts to an example of the “transfer” of Americanization via Yugoslavia into countries behind the Iron Curtain. In the accounts of the actors, in fact, the guest performances in Leningrad saw “indescribable crowds. Tons of young people. Nobody had a ticket, but everyone was trying to get in.” The Voice of America got additional propaganda mileage out of special reports on the Yugoslav production of this play by Albee. Although the security team attempted to bar from entry all viewers who were not in possession of tickets, what ended up happening was that the “security guards were trampled and trounced” and the Leningrad audience heaped ovations on the Belgrade production.<sup>132</sup> A similar instance of “transfer” of theatrical Americanization was the performance of Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* in Bulgaria. The actress Ksenija Jovanović recalls that “bringing writers from the Western hemisphere into this part of the world was, for Bulgarians, as good as a revolution. At a press conference they showed their ire at the director of the Belgrade theater company that he had put *Death of a Salesman* into the repertory. How could he be fighting for communism if he is doing a play from the capitalist world?”<sup>133</sup>

The situation in Poland was a bit different. The journal *Encounter* noted that during the 1956/57 season, seventeen Western plays were to be performed in Poland, whole there was not a single one from the Soviet Union; the musical *Kiss Me, Kate* was also what sold the most tickets in Poland,<sup>134</sup> and the 1960s saw a great number of performances of works by Miller, Williams, and Albee.<sup>135</sup> Things were similar in Czechoslovakia, where Albee was particularly popular.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 652.

<sup>132</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trailović*, 114.

<sup>133</sup> K. Jovanović, “Nepраведно zaboravljeni Putnik,” cited in Dedić, “Igrali smo na ivici mača,” 177.

<sup>134</sup> Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Antoszek and Delaney, “Poland: Transmissions and Translations,” in *The Americanization of Europe*, 223.

<sup>136</sup> H. Popkin, “Theatre in Eastern Europe,” *Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Spring 1967), 40.

In addition to contemporary American dramas, beloved American musicals were performed in Yugoslavia. *West Side Story* played in Belgrade starting on April 3, 1968, “for the first time in Yugoslavia after its success on Broadway and elsewhere in the world.”<sup>137</sup> Belgrade thereby received Shakespeare’s play about Romeo and Juliet, transposed into a musical drama that took place in the Western sites of New York, where gangs from American slums were “at war” in place of the belligerent Capulets and Montagues. This musical was regarded at the time as “the most daring side of American musical theater,” the production of which “exceeded all expectations” in Belgrade.<sup>138</sup> The premiere of Cole Porter’s much-heralded musical *Kiss Me, Kate*, took place in Belgrade on May 11, 1969.<sup>139</sup> In the 1960s this musical was also performed at Croatia’s Komedija theater.<sup>140</sup>

#### HAIR: BROADWAY IN BELGRADE

The 1960s brought something to Yugoslavia that was not just a theater event, but something much broader that affected the entire society—the musical *Hair*. This musical was born off-Broadway in 1967, and subsequently one of its producers realized that its potential jumped the bounds of experimental theater; he made it into a hit on Broadway,<sup>141</sup> which quickly in turn became a planetary phenomenon. Indeed this was a time of institutionalization of avant-garde theater, which was moving more and more frequently from off-Broadway onto Broadway, thereby becoming mainstream. The musical *Hair* was, according to Jovan Ćirilov, a parting of the waters, a break with the living classical tradition of Miller, Williams, and Albee. Early in the rebellious year of 1968, “the anarchistic, furious, unkempt protest known as *Hair* exploded, and it was pretty much the greatest thing created by

<sup>137</sup> “Priča iz zapadnog kvarta,” *Politika*, April 3, 1968, 19.

<sup>138</sup> B. Dragutinović, “Američka transformacija velike dramske teme,” *Politika*, April 4, 1968, 4.

<sup>139</sup> “Poljubi me, Ketu na Terazijama,” *Borba*, May 10, 1969, 17.

<sup>140</sup> V. Lončar, “Kazalište u Hrvatskoj i mladi (1950-2007),” [http://adu.hr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=442:kazalite-u-hrvatskoj-i-mladi-1950-2007&catid=70:clanci&Itemid=106](http://adu.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=442:kazalite-u-hrvatskoj-i-mladi-1950-2007&catid=70:clanci&Itemid=106).

<sup>141</sup> The Broadway premiere of *Hair* was on April 29, 1968.

the rebellion of the flower children on the tradition of the American middle-class musical, negating all of its traditions except the ones related to music.”<sup>142</sup>

It was this *Hair*, then, that found itself in the repertory at Atelje 212 a mere one year later, and immediately after it had been in New York, Paris, London, and Munich.<sup>143</sup> The codirector of *Hair* recalls the groundwork for this presentation in Atelje 212, noting that people began talking about it in the fall of 1968, which means that it is possible that it also had a political dimension. Namely, that summer and fall a “cleaning up of the consequences” of the student demonstrations of June 1968 had taken place, and it is possible that the government wanted to use this to pacify and institutionalize the rebellion of young people.

Of crucial influence on the staging of *Hair* in Belgrade, above and beyond any possible political background (the pacification of insurgent youth), was Atelje 212’s guest appearances in New York, where, between June 26 and July 14, 1968, they performed four of their productions at Lincoln Center. As part of the context of understanding the exceptionally privileged position of Yugoslavia, it is important to note that the members of the Atelje 212 ensemble had the additional benefit of being able to choose, on days when they themselves did not perform, what they would like to see from among the glamorous and expensive shows on Broadway. Because of this, the manager of the company, Mira Trailović, watched *Hair*, and thus was born the idea of bringing this musical from Broadway to Belgrade.<sup>144</sup>

From the outset of work on the performance, the spirit of Broadway was noticeable in Belgrade in a variety of ways—through a far-reaching marketing campaign, the selection of actors through a system of auditions, and also a search for potential actors in discos and dancing halls.<sup>145</sup> All of these things, the marketing, the auditions, and the actors, were created overnight, and that is typical for Americanization as well. An American presence in the work on *Hair* was detectable also in the participation of individual American collaborators. One of the

<sup>142</sup> Ćirilov, *Pre i posle “Kose,”* 3.

<sup>143</sup> Vučetić, “American Cultural Influences in Yugoslavia in the 1960s,” 288.

<sup>144</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trailović*, 141.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 145; Ratković, *Ostalo je ćutanje*, 315.



most important of these was Ray Harrison, an American choreographer, who arranged key numbers; the choreographer Julie Arenal also worked on the show.<sup>146</sup> America was even present in the pauses during rehearsals, through elements of American consumer society that even then were starting to become part of everyday life in Yugoslavia—the numerous participants in the show got free sandwiches and Coca-Cola, which had then just hit the Yugoslav market.<sup>147</sup>

The Belgrade premiere of the musical *Hair*, held on May 19, 1969, had elements of Hollywood glamour, and in the press it was noted that the space in front of Atelje 212 resembled “scenes familiar from New York and Hollywood opening nights.” What made the performance particularly avant-garde, rebellious, and radically different from everything else in the theater repertory at that time was the singing of the song “Hashish,” as well as the act of disrobing, when “from under large white robes six brave souls, four boys and two girls, stand there, naked as the day they were born.”<sup>148</sup> This was the first appearance of naked bodies on a Belgrade stage, in a domestic production, and the recollection of Jovan Ćirilov is of special importance here, because he assessed the nudity in the Belgrade *Hair* to be more open and radical than what was on Broadway.<sup>149</sup> That “baring all” on Yugoslav stages became a trend, both as part of the sexual revolution and of avant-garde theater, can be seen in the production of Alexander Popović’s *Second Door on the Left*, done by the Student Experimental Theater from Zagreb; this performance had even greater shock effect, because it contained a scene of “collective love-making.”<sup>150</sup> The disrobing of the actors in Popović’s work signified the first breaking of this taboo in the Croatian, but also in the Yugoslav, theater. All of this took place under the sign of the counterculture of the 1960s, which was an American, but also a global, phenomenon, and involved a rebellion against the war in Vietnam, the enjoyment of drugs, the sexual revolution, and the hippy movement.

<sup>146</sup> Ratković, *Ostalo je ćutanje*, 317.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>148</sup> Dž. Husić, “Šok u Beogradu,” *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 551, May 27, 1969, 31.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Jovan Ćirilov, Belgrade, May 25, 2010.

<sup>150</sup> Husić, “Šok u Beogradu,” 31.



Although *Hair* was received by the public and in the media as a significant theatrical and cultural event, it was reviewed negatively by some individual critics. A critic for *Borba* maintained that the showing of *Hair* was another example of Americanization and trendiness that does not necessarily bring with them quality, and also that placing *Hair* in the repertoire was just “out of love for some fashionable wish to see Broadway hits appear on stage in Belgrade.” The boisterous polemic carried out in the editorial offices of *Borba* shortly after the premiere shows that *Hair* disturbed many minds, and not just those of critics. For an understanding of the process of Americanization in Yugoslavia, it is significant that many of the grievances of the participants in this polemic had to do with fear of being “infiltrated” by American culture, something that was emphasized in an editorial at the time of the discussions: “The Belgrade premiere is only one of the successes for *Hair*, a work that originated on American soil and that deals with theatrical world of the American hippies. We are an open country and we have a free culture. Maybe it is exactly for those reasons that we sometimes get scared, that sometimes a fear of “infiltration” grips us. Various fears recurred on the occasion of this production.”<sup>151</sup>

The issue is whether this editorial speaks only to the fear of Americanization, or to fear of something new, avant-garde, and rebellious, for which, as a rule, the majority often lack an understanding. The writer Momo Kapor, who believed that an “average apprentice in the suburb of Voždovac” was more important than hippies in New York, pronounced his views on the lack of acceptance of that which is foreign or American in this way: “I have that devilish provincial feeling that I’ve been led into a situation where I watch hippies from New York but not, for example, an apprentice from Voždovac. But it just so happens that these days I am more interested in the problems of the apprentice.”

He detected additional kinds of “infiltration” and issued a call to combat them—after the premiere of *Hair*, in fact, the American erotic magazine *Playboy* appeared for sale at newsstands, and at Komision merchant stores one could find “those great big hippy glasses . . . and

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<sup>151</sup> F. Pašić and S. Stanić, “Jesmo li za šegrte, jesmo li za hipike,” *Borba*, June 1, 1969, 12.

it has been proven that they are harmful to one's vision and are completely inappropriate."<sup>152</sup>

Along with the criticism of those who did not understand or did not want to understand *Hair* in Belgrade, proving that rigidity in the face of Western influences was not always the exclusive property of politics and politicians, one of the most important views emerging from the discussions in *Borba* was that of Dragutin Gostuški, who understood well what the showing of *Hair* connoted: "I am someone who does not travel to London or New York to see a show like this, but I am very gratified and happy when it is presented in Belgrade—regardless of whether or not I like it. I want to be informed, because to be uninformed means to be unfree."<sup>153</sup>

This confirmation is key for understanding the Party's many moves in connection with culture and "imports," or the "infiltration" of foreign and avant-garde art. In these calculations, questions of taste and the orientation of the Party toward the most avant-garde and modern currents in world art are not first and foremost; rather what was at issue was a pragmatic set of decisions to offer to one segment of the population, above all the intellectual elite and young people, the illusion of freedom.

The musical *Hair* had a particular allure at its performance on June 20, 1969, when its writers Gerome Ragni and James Rado attended the show and put in an appearance on the stage. Ragni's take on Belgrade at that time was interesting: "Everybody here is so happy, kind, beautiful. To me it seems like all they do is eat, drink, and sing. I don't see the kinds of problems here that *Hair* is talking about. There is no hopelessness and I don't see the need for young Yugoslavs to seek refuge in drugs. Therefore I expect that the Belgrade *Hair* will be first and foremost a big happy ceremony, a celebration of life's joy."<sup>154</sup>

This image of a happy and idyllic Yugoslavia, and in the view of the author of a rebellious work for the stage, could not help but find

<sup>152</sup> F. Pašić and S. Stanić, "Jesmo li za šegrte, jesmo li za hipike (2)," *Borba*, June 2, 1969, 10.

<sup>153</sup> F. Pašić and S. Stanić, "Jesmo li za šegrte, jesmo li za hipike (3)," *Borba*, June 3, 1969, 12.

<sup>154</sup> "Jedan trenutak za Džeromom Regnijem i Džemsom Radoom," *Borba*, June 22, 1969, 10.

favor with the Yugoslav authorities, because it was far removed from the gray hues in which observers from the West usually painted East European countries, and in addition it contributed to the image of Yugoslavia as a happy place, inclined (in art) to the avant-garde, and still a socialist country. Furthermore, the creators of *Hair* singled out the Belgrade production of their musical as their favorite, and the one with the most spontaneity, out of all the other renditions of it.<sup>155</sup>

In assessing the phenomenon of *Hair*, there remains the question of to what degree it was an “importation” of the most recent artistic developments for reasons of pure copycat trendiness, as opposed to a flawless understanding of contemporary world cultural trends, which the Yugoslav government was, extremely pragmatically, able to use. *Hair* was, in fact, a planetary phenomenon, a phenomenon of the 1960s, something that the historian Arthur Marwick realized; this historian of the 1960s emphasized that *Hair* was a play about everything that was happening at that moment—appearing in it were the hippies and the antiwar movement, the sexual revolution, enthusiasm for drugs, Marcuse’s theories of protest.<sup>156</sup> Transferring the achievements of American counterculture to the Belgrade stage, Tito and the Yugoslav government were engaged in battles on several fronts—the Americans could be satisfied, for their renowned Broadway hit had hit the stage in a communist city; rebellion, which was the show’s central theme (against authority, war, sexual and many other taboos), found its way to Yugoslav audiences; counterculture, which was also a powerful mode of American propaganda—while being both an American and global phenomenon—had surely won new adherents. Beyond winning points with *Hair* from the West, and particularly the United States, the Yugoslav government also won points from young people, because the things that their parents had condemned (the hippie movement, hippie fashions, nudity) was now socially recognized through this Broadway spectacle that was on the stage at Atelje 212. By showing *Hair*, the Yugoslav government could also take satisfaction in the criticism of American society, mostly about the war in Vietnam, that was brought to fruition in the production, which was a part of the

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<sup>155</sup> “Hair Around the World,” *Newsweek*, July 7, 1969, <http://www.orlok.com/hair/holding/articles/HairArticles/newsweek7-7-69.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Marwick, *The Sixties*, 357–358.

country's foreign-policy orientation. Once again, everyone was satisfied—America, the Yugoslav government, and the public. No one at this time gave the time of day to discontented critics in the case of *Hair*. Furthermore, evidence of *Hair*'s importance, and also of its "suitability" for the Yugoslav system is seen in the fact that a portion of this musical was performed in 1969 in the Hall of Youth, in honor of Tito's birthday and the Youth Day.<sup>157</sup> That this was a project of ongoing importance is shown also by the touring that Atelje 212 did with *Hair* all across Yugoslavia. In Ljubljana, for instance, the total attendance for the two shows at Tivoli Hall was over 16,000.<sup>158</sup>

The inconsistency and what we might call the daily pragmatism of the government is evident in the case of *Hair*, which arrived on the general wave of rebelliousness of 1968 but then experienced a fate similar to that of the movies of the Black Wave, and other works of art, in which the danger to the system was only recognized in the 1970s. In fact, this show was pulled from repertories in 1973, officially on account of the scene in which people tear up their draft cards, which, although it had been part of the show since the beginning, was played in front of soldiers of the Yugoslav People's Army.<sup>159</sup> In the first years of *Hair*'s run, the audience members viewed the military overwhelmingly, after the intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia and the threat of a Soviet intervention in Yugoslavia, as a defensive force, but in the seventies, because of domestic tensions, they shifted to a view of the army as a predominantly political force, and that was, perhaps, the reason why a part of *Hair* that had not bothered anyone in 1969 was actually a problem several years later. By the time it was sidelined, *Hair* had been performed 210 times, enough for it to rise to the very top of the list of most frequently performed foreign works at Atelje 212. In the first 50 years that of this theater company's existence, *Hair*, in fact, along with Jerome Kilty's *Dear Liar* (also with 210 performances) and Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (205 performances), was the most-watched performance made from the text of a foreign author, and to this day it preserves its status as one of the cult classics of the stage in socialist Yugoslavia.

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<sup>157</sup> *Politika*, May 26, 1969, 2.

<sup>158</sup> Ratković, *Ostalo je ćutanje*, 327.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 330–331.

### THE AVANT-GARDE: FROM BECKETT TO BITEF

Avant-garde or experimental theater reached its peak in the 1960s. In the postwar theater world, these terms were understood to include theater of the absurd, the poor theater of the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, the ethno-theater of Peter Brook, the ambient theater of Richard Schechner, the theater of the avant-garde of cultural revolution (Bread and Puppet Theater, the Performance Group, Living Theater), and, somewhat later, happenings, as well as an openness to new media.<sup>160</sup> Perhaps the best statement about the significance of experimental theater comes from Arthur Marwick, who said that it was a “power atom of change.”<sup>161</sup>

Originating as an expression of dissatisfaction with the realism of that time and atmosphere (the 1960s America), and with the situation in conventional theaters that were subordinated to commercial concerns, American avant-garde theater fought, by means of its way of life and its view of art, but also with much broader views on society, against the prevailing structures in all spheres of life. For that reason it attracted, in addition to artists, the adherents of various social and political movements, as well as people who were dissatisfied with the state of civil rights or the war in Vietnam or who opposed nuclear armaments, as well as ecologists, feminists, hippies, and homosexuals; in other words, everyone who thought the ruling system was threatening their human freedoms.<sup>162</sup>

Precisely because of that rebelliousness and the drift away from dominant, stagnant values, avant-garde theater went global, and quickly, like many phenomena typical of the twentieth century. Although in the 1960s, it was the American avant-garde theater that was the best known, to give an overview of the place of the theatrical avant-garde in Yugoslavia it is important to note that it also had a presence in some of the countries behind the Iron Curtain. What is more, in the highly regarded American theater journal *The Tulane Drama*

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<sup>160</sup> Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre*, 97–198; Šnel, *Leksikon savremene kulture*, 140–141.

<sup>161</sup> Marwick, *The Sixties*, 340.

<sup>162</sup> Ćosić, *Americki avangardni teatar*, 11.

*Review*,<sup>163</sup> it was noted in 1967 that “Eastern European theater is the most interesting in the world.”<sup>164</sup> In East European theater avant-garde, the group called Laboratory Theater from Wrocław had pride of place, and the American theater journal singled out Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia as countries with the most avant-garde and exciting theater companies. At that time one of the highest profile avant-garde theater artists of the twentieth century, Jerzy Grotowski, was at work in Poland; Jan Kot wrote theoretical texts about theater; works by Sławomir Mrożek and Tadeusz Różewicz played; and all the while the Czechoslovak productions of Otomar Krejča, the work of Theater on the Balustrade, and the writings and dramaturgy of Milan Kundera, Pavel Kohout, and Václav Havel also stood out.<sup>165</sup> In the same article, Yugoslavia is called “a bulwark of the avant-garde,” with its “leading theater, Atelje 212.” Yugoslav avant-garde positions were genuinely solid, and “the problem with the Yugoslav avant-garde was that it was so well entrenched that all its battles seem to be won in advance.”<sup>166</sup> When one analyzes the relationship of art to politics here, it is hard to avoid the idea that the Yugoslav avant-garde had won all of its battles in advance, less because of freedom of artistic expression and much more so because of the support of the authorities. And repertoires in Czechoslovakia, like Yugoslavia, included, by the beginning of the 1960s, Beckett, Ionesco, and Jarry, which definitely put it, in terms of the presence of the avant-garde in Eastern Europe, in a different category from the other countries behind the Iron Curtain except Yugoslavia and Poland.<sup>167</sup> By contrast, the situation in Romania, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria was utterly different—there was no

<sup>163</sup> This is the most cited and most influential journal that deals with production arts. It was founded in 1955 as *The Carlton Drama Review* but was known as *The Tulane Drama Review* after 1957; in 1967 this was altered to *TDR: The Drama Review*. The editor of this journal was the acclaimed avant-garde director Richard Schechner (1962–1969, and from 1986 to the present).

<sup>164</sup> H. Popkin, “Theatre in Eastern Europe,” *Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Spring 1967), 23, 49.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–40.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 49–50.

<sup>167</sup> Caste, *The Dancer Defects*, 337.

avant-garde there, and socialist realism and old-fashioned tastes continued to dominate the stage.<sup>168</sup>

Although the Soviet Union had a powerful theater scene, it looked very negatively upon the avant-garde, and the avant-garde of the end from the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1960s was still considered an expression of extreme decadence there, even though in Europe, and also in Yugoslavia, it had by that point been largely “domesticated.” The Yugoslav press enjoyed noting the extremely conservative stances of Soviet critics directed against the avant-garde writers Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco, reveling as well in the fact that the Soviets’ *Concise Literary Encyclopedia* described Beckett and his dramas as “illogical and incoherent stream of consciousness through which a fable barely pokes its head,” with the final assessment that “the work of Samuel Beckett belongs among the most explicit utterances of contemporary decadence.”<sup>169</sup>

The profile of American theatrical avant-garde in Yugoslavia was visible in various forms, but most frequently through tours by modern dance troupes and experimental theater groups. The American Dance Theater of Alvin Ailey made appearances in 1967 in ten Yugoslav cities.<sup>170</sup> The choreographer Ailey promoted modern ballet in Yugoslavia with financial assistance from USAID, which is evidence of America’s policy on propaganda as far as the use of art is concerned.<sup>171</sup> The famous American dancer and choreographer was also a guest of the Dubrovnik Summer Festival in 1968.<sup>172</sup> Another dancer and choreographer, Alwin Nikolais, whose dance troupe was regarded as one of the most avant-garde in the United States, made guest appearances in Ljubljana, Skopje, Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Dubrovnik in 1968. His ensemble represented “abstract and multi-media theater,” which, by merging dance, text, and electronic music into a unified concept made a significant contribution to “total theater.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Popkin, “Theatre in Eastern Europe,” 40–49.

<sup>169</sup> L.Z., “Sovjetski kritičari o Adamovu i Beketu,” *NIN*, September 30, 1962, 9.

<sup>170</sup> These cities were Belgrade, Karlovac, Opatija, Ljubljana, Pula, Zagreb, Banja-luka, Sarajevo, Skopje, and Niš. See *AJ*, 559, F-526, Izveštaj za 1967 godinu.

<sup>171</sup> “Ejlijev balet,” *Pregled*, vol. 10, nos. 8–9, August–September 1967, 39.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>173</sup> “Trupa Elvina Nikolaisa,” *Pregled*, vol. 11, no. 11, November 1968, 41.

Avant-garde music was also inseparably bound to modern and avant-garde dance. The strongest influence that American avant-garde music had on Yugoslavia was the result of the Musical Biennale in Zagreb,<sup>174</sup> which was a place for the promotion of avant-garde, electronic music. According to reports in the *Deutsche Zeitung*, the East and the West met in Zagreb at this Biennale, with almost all the main figures of the musical avant-garde in attendance. The first such concert of electronic music in Yugoslavia was put on at this festival in 1961; it was a performance by the Ensemble for New Music from Köln, and it featured works “of the most extreme avant-garde nature.” On this occasion the Yugoslav public first had the opportunity to hear the *Concerto for Piano* by “the most daring member of the American avant-garde, John Cage,” as interpreted by the pianist David Tudor.<sup>175</sup> At the second Biennale in 1963, the Soviets sent the Moscow Philharmonic, and the Americans sent John Cage, who put on a midnight concert for the citizens of Zagreb. As the *Forum* of Vienna noted, “the geographical situation and political direct of the host country enabled the inclusion of both West and East, but the bulk of the performances inclined toward Western musical creations.”<sup>176</sup> This comment on the concentration Western musical works is another in a chain of confirmations of Yugoslav orientation to the West, in terms of culture. Another indicator of the Yugoslav openness to the global avant-garde was the comparison by the Austrian press of the overflowing concert halls and the enthusiasm of the audience at Cage’s concert in Zagreb with the conservatism of the Viennese public, which, a week earlier, had greeted this avant-garde artist with ridicule, and without the slightest understanding of the most recent developments in music.<sup>177</sup>

The major advances in avant-garde theater in Yugoslavia were at BITEF. The first year BITEF was held, 1967, is one of the key dates in the acceptance of the theatrical avant-garde in Yugoslavia. The first

<sup>174</sup> The musical Biennale was an international festival of contemporary music, dedicated to the musical avant-garde, which was held in Zagreb every other May.

<sup>175</sup> S. Ostojić, “Klavir nije bio pokvaren,” *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 134, May 30, 1961, 14.

<sup>176</sup> AJ, 559, F-276, 1964, Pozorište, balet i muzika.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.



years of the festival were of great consequence because this was when far-reaching social changes were occurring—the turbulent 1968, the “erotic” 1969, a revolution in behavior from the flower children and their musical *Hair*, with rebellious students on university campuses, and with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. The first years of BITEF dealt with all of these rebellions, for the new theatrical tendencies were full of cries of fury and rebellion, uttered with slogans, gestures, curses, and nudity.<sup>178</sup>

The role of BITEF as a place where the avant-garde in the world theater was promoted, and in a socialist country at that, was a signal of importance outside the world of theater, too. The founding of BITEF, as the artistic director of the festival Jovan Ćirilov saw it, was a political act, the work of political circumstances and artists—above all Mira Trailović and the theater Atelje 212, which was then the most avant-garde in Yugoslavia. “Titoists in the government,” in Ćirilov’s words, deserve credit for the acceptance of artists’ idea of establishing BITEF; it suited the Titoists because it was an obvious example of opening up to the world, which was “at that time only possible in the unusual country of self-managed socialism, and it had no rival in the states of real existing socialism.”<sup>179</sup>

The selection of performances for the first BITEF was a powerful reminder of the significance of the festival and of its complete pro-avant-garde orientation.<sup>180</sup> Participants included Jerzy Grotowski and his Laboratory Theater, the celebrating Living Theater from the United States, India’s Kathakali Theater, and Czechoslovakia’s Theater on the Balustrade.<sup>181</sup> As interesting as the list of participants in the festival might be, even more interesting is the list of who did not participate, especially because, since its founding, BITEF had been considered as a place where East and West could meet. In fact, at this festival, what was obvious was the absence of representatives of the

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<sup>178</sup> J. Ćirilov, “Kako smo stvarali i održavali BITEF,” in *BITEF: 40 godina novih pozorišnih tendencija. Dokumenta Beogradskog internacionalnog teatarskog festivala (1967–2006)* (Belgrade, 2007), 10.

<sup>179</sup> Ćirilov, “Kako smo stvarali i održavali BITEF,” 9.

<sup>180</sup> The first year’s program for BITEF is available in *BITEF: 40 godina novih pozorišnih tendencija*, 51–53.

<sup>181</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-1/I, 2, 1

Soviet Union, “because of their obligations and appearances at the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution,” and as observers they sent Bella Akhmadulina and Bulat Okudzhava.<sup>182</sup>

At the first BITEF, the most important guest appearance for the process of Americanization was, of course, that of Living Theater, and it also evoked the greatest attention in the media. Living Theater, established in 1947, is considered one of the pioneers in American avant-garde theater, which was also the main focal point of the movement.<sup>183</sup> It consisted of about thirty members, and it won international fame for its selection of plays, the style of its productions, the way of live in its own commune, and its political engagement. Out of all the off-Broadway troupes, Living Theater had the greatest influence in the 1960s, in the United States as well as in Europe, and according to Jovan Ćirilov, it was the most consequential and most extreme experimental theater.<sup>184</sup>

Living Theater toured Yugoslavia for the first time as early as 1966, giving performances in Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica, and Banja-luka.<sup>185</sup> Belgraders could see its production of Sophocles’s *Antigone* in 1967 at BITEF, the same year that show had had its world premiere. In at time of intense American involvement in Vietnam, this Brechtian adaptation of Sophocles’ tragedy served as a medium for a dramatic demonstration of Marxist views on an explicitly political topic of current interest.<sup>186</sup>

On the eve of BITEF, before they won over the Belgrade audiences, the members of Living Theatre won over the Belgrade media. Although their *Antigone* was on the BITEF program for September 24 and 25, people were already writing articles about the company in August, and so *Politika ekspres* informed readers that the director, Judith Malina, who had a part in *Antigone*, had given birth and that she would be bringing the baby to Yugoslavia. This bit of news was all the more interesting because it brought a breath of hippie culture to

<sup>182</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-2/I, 7, 4, 1

<sup>183</sup> Ćosić, *Američki avangardni teatar 1960–1980*, 23.

<sup>184</sup> Šnel, *Leksikon savremene kulture*, 382–383; Interview with Jovan Ćirilov, Belgrade, May 25, 2010.

<sup>185</sup> Suša, *Beogradsko pozorište i studentske demonstracije*, 66.

<sup>186</sup> Ćosić, *Američki avangardni teatar*, 37–38.

Yugoslavia. In fact, when asked about coming to Yugoslavia with her baby, Judith Malina answered: "This isn't the only child that we have in our troupe. When we travel all over the world in our mini-buses, we take our children with us."<sup>187</sup> Fascination with the hippie lifestyle could also be found in other newspapers: "The actors travel around the world together with eight children of married couples in the ensemble, in old Volkswagens and vans. Their performances are engaged, like protest songs." By August, even *Večernje novosti* had introduced the avant-garde theater troupe to its readers by means of a travel-and-performance diary with entries from London, Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm, Helsinki, Trieste, Bologna, Venice, and many other cities of Europe."<sup>188</sup> The list of European cities where this troupe made guest appearances coincides for the most part with the list of cities and countries visited by American exhibitions of abstract expressionism and pop art, as organized by MoMA. Although the *Livingovci* (troupe members) had been "driven from America" because of conflicts with the tax authorities, they were, actually, the ideal avant-garde export article, by means of which the European intellectual elite could be influenced, and which altered views of stagnant European values, this time in terms of theater.

The arrival of the *Livingovci* in Belgrade was also accompanied by considerable media attention, in which one could detect a degree of amazement at their appearance:

Twenty members of America's Living Theater showed up dressed as if they were making a commercial for the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Costumes: cowboy hats, burnouses, mini-mini-skirts, silk shawls covered in flower prints, windbreakers from Western films, jumbo-sized necklaces with large, white shells, silver women's bracelets on men's arms, towels instead of belts, garish golden little boots, and up top—furs, and orange sunglasses . . . Hair-dos: the men had longer hair than the women, and it hung down over their eyes and shoulders.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-2/I, 7, 4, 1

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> "Ispređ i iza kulisa BITEF-a: super-mini-suknje i bitls frizura," *Politika*, September 25, 1967, 11.

Another thing that was interesting about the descriptions of the Living Theatre troupe members, was the reaction of people to their performances, where they made direct contact with an audience that was not used to this type of bold theatrical tactic. In their *Antigone*, the viewers themselves also had to play the roles of the inhabitants of Argos, at whose feet the Thebans die not only die but whom they insult, spit at, and even beat. Most media outlets (*NIN*, *Politika*, *Borba*) wrote laudatory things about the avant-garde troupe and their style of acting. *Borba* saw Living Theatre as a group of “angry, uncompromising, and talented young Americans who are carrying to Europe the flag of contestation and negation.”<sup>190</sup> All of this surely led to Yugoslavia being termed by an American journal that same year as the “focal point of the avant-garde.”

From the case of Living Theater it would seem obvious that in propaganda and in a political sense both America and the Yugoslav side profited. The gain for the U.S. side was Yugoslavia’s “demonstration” to the other countries behind the Iron Curtain that there was enough space for an orientation toward America, and that it need not endanger ideology, as well as that the ideologically painless acceptance of the avant-garde also advanced the cause and scope of one’s own culture. Conversely, if one bears in mind that Living Theatre’s *Antigone* was a presentation in which the American policy in Vietnam was harshly criticized, in accordance with Yugoslav foreign policy, it is clear that the Yugoslav government was also manipulating the theater of the American avant-garde. That is a possible explanation for why Belgrade had no inclination to see anything subversive in a troupe that had as its main goal the emancipation of men and women from various forms of social and political compulsion, while foregrounding, in the case of Living Theatre, the straightforward recognition of the rebellion against American society and the war in Vietnam.

The New York troupe of Alwin Nikolais took part in the second BITEF. This artist was quite significant for avant-garde theater, because he combined ballet, acting, and electronic music, and critics held him up as the authentic originator of abstract ballet.<sup>191</sup> In addi-

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<sup>190</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-2/I, 7, 4, 1.

<sup>191</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-3/II, 3, 6, 4, 1.

tion to his artistic importance, it is noteworthy, in the context of American cultural politics, that he was a member of the Council on the Arts, created by governor Nelson Rockefeller, and also that he was an adviser and consultant to government arts agencies.<sup>192</sup> The fact that Nikolais's ensemble was sponsored by the State Department speaks to the role of abstract ballet as a weapon in the Cold War.<sup>193</sup> This avant-garde project of Cold War exports met with a tremendous degree of approval among the public in Belgrade, and the troupe's performance ended with stormy applause. And reviews, especially in the leading daily newspapers, were extremely positive, with the praise leaping the bounds of ballet and theater and rising to the level of praise for American society, as expressed in laudatory critical notices of American abstract expressionism and pop art.<sup>194</sup>

Although without a performance, another of the leading artists of American avant-garde theater was a guest of the Festival—Ellen Stewart, the famous La Mama.<sup>195</sup> She visited BITEF as a member of the Round Table and the Start-up Committee for the Establishment of International Theater for Young Authors. This avant-garde artist had first toured Yugoslavia with her troupe La Mama in 1966, when they appeared at the International Festival of Student Theater Companies in Zagreb,<sup>196</sup> and her first performance at BITEF was in 1970, when the company gave a performance of *Arden of Feversham*, acclaimed as the finest show of off-Broadway. The troupe enjoyed success similar to off-Broadway at BITEF, where, in addition to the premiere and reprise, there were two special presentations, with more than 400 viewers, which exceeded the number of visitors at other BITEF presentations that year.<sup>197</sup> Prior to Belgrade, La Mama had performed in New York, Amsterdam, the Hague, London, Munich, Vienna, Spoleto, Capri, Herceg Novi, and Titograd.<sup>198</sup> This group, too, like the

<sup>192</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-3/II, 3, 6, 2, 3.

<sup>193</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-3/II, 3, 6, 4, 4.

<sup>194</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-4/II, 7, 4, 1.

<sup>195</sup> In the context of Americanization, it is interesting that the ensemble of Atelje 212, along with many other theater people, called Mira Trailović "La Mama."

<sup>196</sup> IAB, BITEF, Bilten II BITEF-a, No.. 20, October 2, 1968.

<sup>197</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-7/IV, 2, 1.

<sup>198</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-9/IV, 7, 3.

*Livingovci* from two years previously, created a buzz among the public with their lifestyle. The troupe was composed of both African-Americans and whites who acted out their pieces without scenery or costumes, rhythmically striking stones and bricks to the music of “natural percussion.”<sup>199</sup>

In an overview of the Yugoslav position between East and West and its relationship to the avant-garde, an indicative “incident” from the second BITEF was tied to the appearance of the Bolshoi Theater, doing Gogol’s *The Government Inspector*, directed by the eminent Russian director Georgy Tovstonogov. The Belgrade Festival, which had as one of its fundamental goals the promotion of the international avant-garde, provided the Soviet director with a platform for its critique. As a guest of BITEF he declared that he “had a great deal of respect for the theater of the absurd and was even prepared to use the modalities of the theater of the absurd, but not for the self-indulgent silliness of Beckett and Ionesco.”<sup>200</sup> The tension in Yugoslav-Soviet relations, especially after the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, was not, however, limited to Tovstonogov’s critique of Beckett and Ionesco, but led to an even bigger scandal. After the guest appearance in Belgrade, Tovstonogov published an article in *Pravda* in Moscow in which he sharply attacked the organizers of BITEF, accusing them of distributing to the audience at *The Government Inspector* not a program but “a malicious little text entitled ‘Walk Out on This Theater Performance.’”<sup>201</sup>

Borka Pavićević, who took part in the “Citizens’ Initiative” directed at that time against the Bolshoi, reports that, as a sign of protest against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, she and Bogdan Tirnanić distributed flyers in front of Atelje 212 that said: “We hereby inform you that military forces of the Warsaw Pact entered Prague on August 22. *The Government Inspector* is at BITEF in Belgrade. Citizens, go back home.” This protest was accompanied by the arrival of Želimir Žilnik, Bojana Marijan, and Branko Vučićević, driving a car with a discarded stove-pipe symbolizing a Russian tank, while Tirnanić and Pavićević accosted the theater-goers at the end of

<sup>199</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-10/4, 7, 4, 1.

<sup>200</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-4/II, 7, 3.

<sup>201</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-4/II, 7, 4, 1.

the performance with cries of “Ibeovci!”<sup>202</sup> Repercussions of the Soviet intervention were even felt in the performance hall at *The Government Inspector*, with a portion of the audience refusing to stand when the Soviet national anthem was played.<sup>203</sup>

This episode is, truly, another colorful indicator of the influence of diplomatic events on culture and art. It was a period when, because of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, much more than Soviet performances were being criticized; in a direct way Soviet politics were in people’s sights. After the unpleasantness of 1968, the BITEF of the following year had no Soviet representatives, and the same thing happened the next year, too, when the Soviets begged off of their performance with a telegram from Moscow that explained that they could not attend for financial reasons. In the *Bulletin* of the Festival it was duly noted that this was the “first time that a group had rejected an offer to participate.”<sup>204</sup>

The ovations given to American experimental theater groups and the subversiveness on display with Soviet ones, as well as Yugoslavia’s giving free reign to the avant-garde and even giving it state sponsorship, contributed to the good reputation and image of Yugoslavia, as confirmed by an article in the prominent theater journal *Plays and Players* in November of 1968; it hailed Yugoslavia’s artistic freedoms and pointed out that in the twelve years that Atelje 212 had been in operation there had not been any censorship, save the “advice” given to the company that it should pull the play *Kape dole (Hats Off)* by Aleksandar Popović. The author of the article went so far as to describe the artistic freedoms and concluded that Yugoslavs had it much better at that time than did the British under the censorship of Lord Chamberlain.<sup>205</sup>

The third BITEF, held in 1969, “confirmed” the position of American avant-garde theater in Yugoslavia, for America was the only country that year to have two presentations at the festival. The theater-going public was able to see the Performance Group and also Bread

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<sup>202</sup> Interview with Borka Pavićević, Belgrade, May 25, 2010. The term *ibeovci* (*ibeovci* in the plural) is a derogatory designation for supporters of the USSR after the 1948 Tito-Stalin split. It means “cominformist” in English.

<sup>203</sup> Interview with Jovan Ćirilov, Belgrade, May 25, 2010.

<sup>204</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-10/IV, 7, 4, 1; *Bilten*, no. 16, September 23, 1970.

<sup>205</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-4/7, 4, 2, 1.

and Puppet Theater, two troupes that were highly *engagé* and together are counted as the initiators of “environmental theater.”

The Performance Group was founded in 1967, on the initiative of Richard Schechner, of the founders of “environmental theater.” This ensemble insisted on making use of psycho-physical exercises, music, and rituals, and the idea was to create, for every performance, a new, specific ambiance, in which the actors and the viewers would find themselves together, without chairs and without a proper stage. *Dionysius in '69* was their first show; it had had its New York premiere in June 1968, and Belgrade was the next city anywhere in the world to see it.<sup>206</sup> Since the performance had been conceived as a collective act by the performers and the viewers individuals from the audience were included in the performance, as they talked about themselves and contemporary social problems, so that the flow of events depended largely upon their contributions. Physical contact between the public and the performers was also important—by touches and strokes the actors tried to get the viewers to free themselves from prejudices, fears, and shame; one can imagine how provocative this performance was.<sup>207</sup>

After the appearances of Schechner's group, it was time for another important event for the Belgrade public—the arrival of the American troupe known as the Bread and Puppet Theater. This group came into existence in New York in 1961, and, on a social level, it was characterized by leftist convictions, a pacifist orientation, and criticism of the war in Vietnam.<sup>208</sup> Their performance of *The Cry of the People for Meat*, which the group gave at BITEF, itself contained a forceful protest against the U.S. military engagement in Vietnam. The visit of the group to Belgrade gave a similar taste of the hippie movement, the same way that Living Theater had done two years earlier. In addition to their lifestyle, their demeanor in public was also exciting, especially the parade of actors and puppets that proceeded along the streets of Belgrade with kettledrums and all kinds of noise.<sup>209</sup>

The acceptance of the American avant-garde in the 1960s, both on the part of the authorities and of large parts of the cultural public,

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<sup>206</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-6/III, 7, 1; 7, 3.

<sup>207</sup> Ćosić, *Američki avangardni teatar*, 109.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 117–119.

<sup>209</sup> IAB, BITEF, K-6/III, Bilten III BITEF-a, No. 9, September 9, 1969.



as well as by critics, left but few traces on the Yugoslav theater arts. Avant-garde theater, such as that promoted by BITEF, never succeeded in gaining great influence on the theater scene or in changing it radically.<sup>210</sup> Theater specialists point to firm conservatism in theater circles, who in fact put the brakes on emancipatory possibilities that had been offered by the government for political reasons. At any rate, even if it did not have as much influence on dramatic artists as, for instance, pop art had on painters, this says more about the people in the theater business than it does about the cultural policies of Yugoslavia; BITEF was a chance for the Yugoslav theater-goer to see the summit of world avant-garde theater, and to become part of it.

As an obvious example, however, of acceptance of the avant-garde that stands out is the Student Experimental Theater (SET), which first appeared in Zagreb in 1956 as a rebellion against “literary theater”; it was inspired by the works of Antonin Artaud, by American “happenings,” and by Living Theatre.<sup>211</sup> Two of the performances of this troupe from the end of the 1960s are especially noteworthy for being avant-garde and rebellious—*Viet Rock* and *Second Door on the Left*. Both of the pieces were socially provocative and subversive, and both made use of avant-garde language in sets and staging. Putting on Megan Terry’s *Viet Rock* was the most striking indicator of the Americanization and avantgardization of Yugoslav theater. This play, commissioned by the theater company La Mama, was published in the leading theater journal *Tulane Drama Review*. Because they kept a close eye on the American avant-garde scene, the students of SET put together their own version of this engaged, anti-war rock opera, immediately after its premiere; their performance included film, the bodies of the actors, a stylized stage, loud noise, and rock music.<sup>212</sup>

When considering American presence on Yugoslav stages, it is obvious that Yugoslavia, by means of its policies toward American authors, whether they be from the mainstream like Arthur Miller or from the avant-garde like Living Theatre or the Performance Group,

<sup>210</sup> Suša, *Beogradsko pozorište i studentske demonstracije*, 68.

<sup>211</sup> V. Loncar, “Kazaliste u Hrvatskoj i mladi (1950-2007)”, [http://www.adu.hr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=442:kazalite-u-hrvatskoj-i-mladi-1950-2007&catid=70:clanci&Itemid=106](http://www.adu.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=442:kazalite-u-hrvatskoj-i-mladi-1950-2007&catid=70:clanci&Itemid=106) (20 May 2010)

<sup>212</sup> Međimorec, “Studentsko kazalište,” 141–143.

was sending to Washington a message about its attitude toward drama but also, in a much more profound and far-reaching way, a message about politics. Yugoslavia's repertories contained the broadest spectrum of American authors and plays, on the most varied themes, something that shows the Americanization of Yugoslav theater but also, in some way, that by theater Yugoslavia could criticize America. Thus we have Arthur Miller, a leftist and a friend of the USSR, on stage in Yugoslavia; thus we have the *Livingovci* at BITEF, who were "driven out" of America, as much because of the nonpayment of taxes as because of their critical views of American society; and thus we have *Hair*, one of the most popular shows ever at Atelje 212, with its powerful message against the war in Vietnam, a message shared by Bread and Puppet, Living Theatre, and La Mama. But even with these calculations on the part of Belgrade, once more everyone profited from the situation. The Americans, although apparently the targets of criticism by dint of the authors, plays, and theater companies selected, knew that such criticism would be short-lived, and that the numerous American authors and plays advocating freedom of speech in their critiques and stands, even if these were to some extent anti-American, were changing Yugoslav society for the long term, both at the level of esthetics (by adopting new theater standards) and also in terms of substance.

By sending "renegades" from official artistic production to Yugoslavia (such as Living Theatre), the United States was probably attempting to create Yugoslav "rebels" also, who would challenge the system by means of art. Sometimes this did indeed happen, and the Yugoslav government would temporarily act like the American one, endeavoring to turn the "rebellious" art to its advantage and having it actually work for the system; but frequently the government showed another side altogether by punishing heresy.

#### HAIR UP, HATS OFF; OR, YES TO THE AVANT-GARDE AND NO TO SOCIAL CRITICISM!

The picture of Yugoslav theater reality could evoke in an outsider a feeling of the greatest possible artistic freedom. When this did actually happen, as we have mentioned, such assessments appeared in the Western press. The attitude toward the *Livingovci*, La Mama, *Hair*,

and so on was not “copied” with regard to domestic dramatic texts if they touched on ideology or dealt with current Yugoslav conditions. The government saw no danger in avant-garde experimentation, just as it did not recognize itself in Orwell’s 1984. What disturbed it, and what it censored, was encroachment upon communist dogma and the reexamination of Yugoslav reality.

Doors that were open wide to the avant-garde and the foreign-policy maneuverings of Belgrade with this avant-garde were frequently misused as a counterpoint to the kinds of pressures that did exist in the Yugoslav art world, pressures that were conditioned by the country’s domestic political situation. Even here, as in other areas of Americanization, the derision aimed at American culture also had the function of concealing the slap in the face to domestic culture. Playing out against the backdrop of relations with Yugoslav artists and the arts in these years were the rise of nationalism, as well as bilateral conflicts between the republics and the central government, and clashes among the republics themselves, which came to pass in the 1960s and 1970s after basic political questions were broached unacceptably in art. Thus there were many decisions pertaining to art that it is impossible to analyze without taking into account Yugoslav domestic politics at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s—a subject that goes beyond the framework of our theme of the Americanization of popular culture in Yugoslavia.

The freedoms that had been proclaimed had, therefore, another side to them, and there were also bans that occurred in the theater world, too, which was open to the most daring “imported” forms of avant-garde art but not for any “domestic” substance, that is to say, re-examination of Yugoslavia’s revolutionary past and communist dogma. The “affairs” involving the shows *Hats Off*, *When the Pumpkins Blossomed*, and *Second Door on the Left* are quite illustrative of this point.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> For more on bans in the theater world, see *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990. (This is a special issue called *Pozorište i vlast u Jugoslaviji (1944–1990): “druga strana medalja”—obračuni i zabrane*); F. Pašić, *Kako smo čekali Godoa kad su cvetale tikve*; Novaković, *Kako je Tito razbijao “Tikve”*; A. Inkert, *Vroča pomlad 1964* (Ljubljana 1990); A. Gabrič, “Cenzura gledališkega repertoarja v prvi in drugi Jugoslaviji”, *Cenzurirano: zgodovina censure na Slovenskem od 19. stoletja do danes* (Ljubljana 2010): 171–188.

The first direct prohibitions of dramas in Yugoslavia can be traced back to 1952, when Jean Anouilh's *Thieves' Carnival* was banned from the Belgrade Drama Theater—something that is remembered by contemporaries as one of the last gasps of the “hard-liners” and conservatives. After that, the first attempt to put on Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, at the same theater, also ended with a ban in 1954, but without a political justification; the director of the theater at that time recalls that the performance was not canceled but rather postponed “until better times.” These “better times” made their timid appearance in the studio of the painter Mića Popović a few months later, when *Godot* had its premiere; this was followed by a true institutionalization of the avant-garde with its performance at Atelje 212 on December 17, 1956. This was the first *Godot* in a socialist country, at a point in time when it was still fighting for its rightful place in the West.<sup>214</sup>

A peculiarity of the majority of Yugoslav theater prohibitions represents a special difficulty in laying bare the pressures exerted on dramatic artists, and this peculiarity existed in cases of censorship more generally, too: usually no official written documents existed regarding the formal banning of an event; one cannot tell who the initiator of a ban is (and even in cases when, after many years, word gets out about who this initiator was, the person usually denies it energetically), and especially paradoxical is the fact that most often the prohibitions were set in motion by the theater companies themselves.<sup>215</sup> According to Jovan Ćirilov, the authorities wished to maintain the illusion of freedom, and so what needed to be suffocated would be “suffocated underneath a pillow.”<sup>216</sup> Latinka Perović supports this view with her assessment that “the mechanism of censorship was not for someone from the Central Committee to seek a ban directly, but rather to create a certain atmosphere in which the theaters would then decide to cancel the performance.”<sup>217</sup> In generally, when considering censorship in Yugoslavia, the ex-Yugoslav historiography up to now evinces no efforts to research the phenomenon of censorship in a more detailed

<sup>214</sup> Pašić, *Kako smo čekali Godoa kad su cvetale tikve*, 15–16, 18–30.

<sup>215</sup> P. Marjanović, “Pozorište i vlast u Jugoslaviji (1944–1990): ‘druga strana medalja’—obračuni i zabrane,” *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990, 4.

<sup>216</sup> Interview with Jovan Ćirilov, Belgrade, May 25, 2010.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Latinka Perović, June 19, 2010.

way, and, beyond various indices of things that happened, nothing but fragmentary analyses of individual cases exist.<sup>218</sup>

First came the case of *Tople leje* (*Rooting Beds*) in Slovenia, a show in which a catastrophic economic situation was criticized, when caused by policies of “socialist agriculture” and class struggle against kulaks after the triumph of the revolution, with the “implacably powerful figure of a village manager named Stari’ (Old Man), which was an allusion to Tito.”<sup>219</sup> Then came the cases in which the greatest pressures of all were put on theater artists, in Serbia at the end of the 1960s.

The first instance of direct intervention or censorship in this period was in the case of the performance of *Hats Off* by Aleksandar Popović in Atelje 212.<sup>220</sup> Although this show began and ended its short run before the student demonstrations, it was put together in an atmosphere of generalized tension, in which Yugoslav society of that day abounded, and which would explode into student demonstrations a few months later. The performance of *Hats Off* came to represent a kind of “announcement” of the style of future cancellations with which subsequent “unsuitable” shows would meet. Although it had, for the most part, been praised by reviewers, Popović’s play disappeared quietly from the repertoire after only three performances, demonstrating that there was a great disconnect at that time between drama criticism and the fate of performances.<sup>221</sup> Jovan Ćirilov claims that the fate of *Hats Off* was sealed by a telephone call to the director of Atelje 212, Mira Trailović. Trailović herself has noted, “You would be told by telephone: this show cannot go on.”<sup>222</sup> In Ćirilov’s view, the main characters reminded people too much of Tito and Jovanka Broz. Even the title of the play was the subject of detailed analysis. Although

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<sup>218</sup> The latest books on censorship include R. Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu. Partija, kultura i cenzura u Srbiji šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina XX veka* (Belgrade, 2016) and M. Lopušina, *Crna knjiga—cenzura u Srbiji 1945–2015* (Novi Sad, 2015).

<sup>219</sup> A. Inkret, “Vrelo proleće 1964,” *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990, 258–259.

<sup>220</sup> The premiere of this show was on February 17, 1968, and the third and final show was on February 25 of the same year.

<sup>221</sup> Suša, *Beogradsko pozorište i studentske demonstracije* ’68, 111–112.

<sup>222</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trailović*, 108–110.

the name of the play was *Hats Off*, some people interpreted the title as being *Ka-Pe dole*, or “Down with the C.P. [Communist Party].”<sup>223</sup>

The director Zoran Ratković recalls that, on the day of the fourth performance, Latinka Perović, a high-ranking functionary of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, came to Atelje 212 and sought out Mira Trailović. After an hour-long conversation, Perović left the premises, and Trailović hung an announcement saying “Canceled” on the bulletin board; no further performances of *Hats Off* ever took place.<sup>224</sup> According to Perović, however, this incident is actually an example of the “creation of a certain atmosphere,” in which the theater company itself did the deed. In the case of *Hats Off*, she says that it was Joška Nađ, who was high up in the Serbian leadership, who said after seeing the show that it was inviting the destruction of the government.<sup>225</sup>

The next attack on freedom in the theater, and indeed many broader freedoms, came with the removal of the show *When the Pumpkins Blossomed*, based on the novel by Dragoslav Mihailović<sup>226</sup>; the director was Bora Drašković, and the show premiered in the Yugoslav Drama Theater on October 6, 1969. Its run was, like with *Hats Off*, unusually short—it was removed from the repertory on October 25 of the same year, and that was even after a series of laudatory reviews in *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, and *Politika ekspres*. The campaign of persecution was set into motion by a review in *Borba*, published ten days after the premiere.<sup>227</sup> Another strike against the play came with the article “The Pumpkin is a Strange Fruit,” published in *Politika ekspres* on October 12, 1969, by a reviewer who, five days earlier, had already published an extremely positive notice of the performance.<sup>228</sup> The attacks were carried forward by *Politika*, *NIN*, *Komunist*, and *Narodna*

<sup>223</sup> J. Ćirilov, “Kape dole ‘drugim vratima levo,’” *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990, 92.

<sup>224</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trailović*, 108.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Latinka Perović, June 19, 2010.

<sup>226</sup> This novel was published in 1968, and the dramatization of it was published in the *Letopis Matice srpske* in its August–September 1969 issue.

<sup>227</sup> For more on the banning of this play, see Novaković, *Kako Tito razbijao “Tikve.”*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

*armija*, leading up to the final death-dealing blow for the show given in Tito's address in Zrenjanin.

The case of the prohibition of *When the Pumpkins Blossomed* instead of Serbian name is exemplary, because in it the mechanism of political repression is evident in its full brutality, in all phases. Politicians gave the impetus to the ban, and politicians carried it out, as did members of the theater "guild" themselves, but the main strike against the play came from Josip Broz Tito himself, in what was one of the few direct attacks by the president of the country against a specific work of art.<sup>229</sup> In his speech in Zrenjanin,<sup>230</sup> Tito listed the grave accusations according to which the author "does not want socialism, but something else," as well as the charge that "he is spitting on our accomplishments" and on "the sacrifices that we have made." Tito concluded with: "I am not demanding that you, I don't know, arrest this man now, etc., but rather the contrary—I want the voice of the people to be the thing that prevents them from taking up such issues." This sealed the fate of the show.<sup>231</sup> The conclusion of the pronouncement, however, points to the fact that the head of state did not have just Dragoslav Mihailović in his crosshairs, for he took pains to use the word "people."

So, at the end of the 1960s, who were "them" from Tito's comments? After all, a large group of people dissatisfied with the system appeared then, particularly after the removal of Ranković (1966), the "Declaration on the Croatian Language" and the "Suggestions for Consideration" (1967), and the student demonstrations of 1968; thus there were many candidates for "them." No longer were these people just anticommunists, Cominformists, nationalists, and rebellious students; rather this was now a homogenous group of discontented persons,

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<sup>229</sup> V. Janković, "O političkim zabranama u pozorištu," *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990, 6–7. Aleksandar Novaković maintains that Tito only twice attacked artists directly—the first time it was Branko Ćopić for his book *Jeretička priča*, and the second time it was Dragoslav Mihailović with the performance of *When Pumpkins Blossomed*. See Novaković, *Kako je Tito razbijao "Tikve"*, 49.

<sup>230</sup> This is a talk Tito gave to representatives of politico-economic activists from local governments in the Banat. It took place in Zrenjanin on October 25, 1969.

<sup>231</sup> V. Janković, "O političkim zabranama u pozorištu," *Scena*, vol. 1, nos. 2–3, March–June 1990, 6–7.



something that resembled an eventual political opposition. The special sessions of the Serbian Philosophical Society provide evidence of this; participants included people accused of being nationalists, anarcho-liberals, "Cominformists," and "members of student extremist groups," but also many discontented artists and people who worked in the cultural sphere.<sup>232</sup>

We can only guess about the concrete grounds for removing *Pumpkins*. Oskar Davičo held that the reason lay in the sentence "They are worse than the Germans" (which, supposedly refers to the communists, although to this day it remains unclear whether or not the sentence was actually uttered in the premiere).<sup>233</sup> Davičo also considered *When the Pumpkins Blossomed* to be pro-Stalinist.<sup>234</sup> Dragoslav Draža Marković, in his memoirs, notes that the Artistic Council of the Yugoslav Drama Theater decided to remove the play from the repertory, with the following explanation: "There was no other way out to be found. Allowing the rehabilitation of the Cominform made no sense and had no justification."<sup>235</sup>

Reports in the international media also speak to the encroachment on overly sensitive issues relating to Yugoslavia's conflict with the Cominform. Thus, for AFP (Agence France-Presse), the reason for the sidelining of the play was that "for the first time since the dramatic years of 1948–1949, when Yugoslavia expected at any minute to be attacked by Stalin's tanks, these events were being revisited, with Yugoslavia's secret position in its struggle against the Cominform being revealed in an extremely unfavorable light." According to Reuters, "a controversial Yugoslav play has been removed from the playlist after President Tito, in a public talk, harshly attacked the author." There were, however, also opinions that backed up Tito's decision, regardless of whether or not censorship is an extraordinarily undemocratic act. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* stressed "that Tito's condemnation of Mihailović's play has a specific aim, because

<sup>232</sup> Novaković, *Kako je Tito razbijao "Tikve,"* 31, 70–71.

<sup>233</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Informacija o sastanku na Filozofskom fakultetu u Beogradu.

<sup>234</sup> O. Davičo, "Protiv administrativnih mešanja u stvaralaštvo," *Student*, December 16, 1969.

<sup>235</sup> Marković, *Život i politika*, vol. 1, 147.



the play contains a fillip to those who, even today, are inclined to be pro-Soviet, if not pro-Stalinist"; furthermore, Tito's attack was aimed at those forces agitating for less, not more, freedom."<sup>236</sup>

The case of Zoran Gluščević is further evidence that pressures on intellectual nonconformists were growing stronger and stronger. He was the editor at the time of *Književne novine* and had, in fact, published an article titled "Five Variations on the Theme of the Hot Prague Spring of 1968." This text was portrayed as offensive to a foreign country (the USSR), and on this account *Književne novine* was suppressed by a court, and Gluščević was removed as its editor and then sentenced to six months' jail time (with another year on probation).<sup>237</sup> In the "Gluščević affair," it was paradoxical that the issue was a powerful critique of the Soviet intervention, something that was completely in harmony with Yugoslav foreign policy—just not at that particular moment in time and diplomacy. To be exact, the text was published just before the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, Andrei Gromyko, visited Yugoslavia, and the pressure "to punish" the author, exercised by the Soviets, contributed to the pronouncement of this verdict.

Ever more obvious and powerful pressure from the government on culture led to the decision of the Council of Atelje 212, in November, to interrupt rehearsals of the drama *Second Door on the Left* by Aleksandar Popović, a play that dealt with the 1968 demonstrations. A walk-through was organized, at which the production was discussed and it was decided that it would be "removed." In the execution of the play *Second Door on the Left*, or, more precisely, for the cessation of rehearsals for this performance, the chief accolades go to Gavro Altman, who was a member of the theater's Committee and was the chief editor of *Komunist*. He gave the assessment that the work contained "so much social untruth, and was so bad, that the social resources entrusted to the Council of Atelje 212 for its functioning should not be expended on a production of this work."<sup>238</sup> The following Council members—all

<sup>236</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Strane agencije o komadu "Kad su cvetale tikve" i Titovom govor održanom u Zrenjaninu, Belgrade, October 31, 1969.

<sup>237</sup> D. Todorović, "Zoran Gluščević, žrtva međurepubličkih obračuna," *Hereticus*, 2004-1, <http://www.hereticus.org/arhiva/2004-1/zoran-gluscevic-zrtva-medukomunistickih-obračuna/html>.

<sup>238</sup> G. Altman, "Član saveta," *Student*, December 16, 1969.

in the Party—were for a stop to the play: Gavro Altman, Đoko Stojčić, one actor, and theater workers (the technical and administrative staff).<sup>239</sup> Although Mira Trailović voted for the continuation of the production, the fact is that in “crisis situations” there was a certain correspondence between her decisions and political requirements. Jovan Ćirilov provides a view of her reactions to bans in “her” theater: “Then she would speak somewhat ironically, ‘like the regime,’ and say things like: well, we live a nice life anyway, in comparison to the Soviets, and the Rumanians, and the Czechs and Slovaks, the East Germans, etc. And especially compared to the Albanians. I mean, we have our passports, standard, and we just have to respect all that and be reasonable as soon as they wag a threatening finger at us.”<sup>240</sup>

Inter-republic relations, expressed in the opposing views of individual republican governments on many issues, had their “moment” also in the case of the play *Second Door on the Left*, because Popović’s work, before its Belgrade premiere was scotched, had been staged by the Student Experimental Theater in Zagreb, after which it went on to be a great success while touring the entire country and taking part in prestigious theater festivals.<sup>241</sup> It is even harder to understand the decision of the censor in Belgrade when one knows that the Zagreb performance, which preserved its place on the playlist, was explicitly critical, boldly speaking out about the student uprising of 1968, about the moral failings of politicians, about emotions betrayed, and about social injustice.<sup>242</sup>

In an article that Aleksandar Popović wrote about the prohibition of the play *When Pumpkins Blossomed*, published in *Student* on November 11, 1969, the controversial author noted that nobody was trying to explain why it had been necessary to remove this production from the repertory of a theater as important as the Yugoslav Drama Theater.<sup>243</sup> He attempted to explain the system by which the play was sidelined: “First, it was stated very authoritatively that something needed be changed in the production, which was done. Then the cor-

<sup>239</sup> Lj. Draškić, “O zameni merila,” *Student*, December 16, 1969.

<sup>240</sup> Ćirilov, “Kape dole ‘drugim vratima levo,’” 92.

<sup>241</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Suprotstaviti se na vreme; Suša, *Beogradsko pozorište*, 114.

<sup>242</sup> Međimorec, “Studentsko kazalište,” 132–133.

<sup>243</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Suprotstaviti se na vreme.

rected show was put on, and it received additional reviews stating that it was beyond fixing. Finally, the show was pulled from the repertory in such a way that 800 people who had purchased tickets for that very show turned up at a boarded-up theater.”<sup>244</sup>

The polemic that took place in the publication *Student* about theater censorship in November and December 1969 was another of the unique features of the Yugoslav system—and when prohibitions came along, there existed a space for the public debate about it (for example, in the newspaper *Student* there was one about *When Pumpkins Blossomed*, while in the journal *Gledišta* there was one when the film *Grad (The City)* was banned, in *Borba* when *Јутро (Morning)* was banned, and also in the special sessions of the Serbian Philosophical Society). The politician Dragoslav Draža Marković summed up, in a debate in *Student*, “the purely political action as well thought-out and organized, and one in which everyone was involved: from Cominformists to anti-Communists, supporters of Đilas, and Serbian nationalists.” This also showed the government’s fear at the thought of a growth in the strength of the opposition.<sup>245</sup> This leads to the question of whether the government was “defending itself,” by allowing such polemics, from charges that it was undemocratic, or whether this was another indication of the inconsistency, or even the absence, of the system.

The pressure exerted in 1968 and 1969, as in the majority of such cases, was merely an expression of the complicated domestic political situation in Yugoslavia. Tito arrived, after the student protests of 1968, at the firm conviction that too much freedom was the main cause of the difficulties besetting Yugoslavia.<sup>246</sup> Although the “reestablishment of order” was most apparent in the settling of accounts with Croatia’s Maspok and the Liberals, pressure was felt in various segments of society, and also in the world of culture. To be sure, even after the fall of Ranković, and especially following the “Declaration on the Croatian Language” and the “Suggestion for Consideration,” the pressure grew on the media as well as on the cultural sphere. According to some tallies, in the period of only one year Serbia saw approximately forty “interventions” in the sphere of culture, providing the best possible

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Marković, *Život i politika*, vol. 1, 152.

<sup>246</sup> Đukić, *Slom srpskih liberala. Tehnologija političkih obračuna Josipa Broza*, 89.

illustration of the atmosphere at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s.<sup>247</sup>

This state of affairs ramped up the dissatisfaction of a portion of the intellectual elite, and on November 26 and December 3, 1969, the Serbian Philosophical Society organized public forums called “Socialism and Culture,” in response to an atmosphere marked by “pressure, bans, the impossibility of public dialogue, and the prohibition of texts”; at these meetings open, and sharp, criticism of the government was voiced. At the forum held on November 26, 1969, major examples of repression in culture were enumerated (the cancellation of theater performances, criticism of and pressure on the Black Wave), and the Party was accused of hewing to a Stalinist line.<sup>248</sup>

The findings of the meeting of discontented persons was the League of Communists had executed an organized Stalinist purge against the arts, and that unless writers, directors, actors, and everyone who works in the arts stands up to the bureaucratic party, danger looms for the possibility of very grim times for creative work.<sup>249</sup> At the forum, one unidentified student declared, “Our party has 2–3 million members but our country has 20 million inhabitants. Where does a minority get the right to prescribe ideology?” This shows that disaffection had reached wide swaths of society.<sup>250</sup>

Cases of prohibition and censorship, and an increasingly open rebellion, remind us that in cultural and intellectual spheres, despite formal freedoms, the situation was not ideal—though the regime presented it that way to the West. The cultural elite, to whom abstract art had been “bestowed as a gift,” along with avant-garde theater and experimental music, was more and more dissatisfied with the prevailing situation, even if that level of discontent was markedly lower in art than in society. Democratic conditions, epitomized by the presence of the most recent global trends in Yugoslavia, did of course create

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Diskusija o kulturi u socijalizmu, November 27, 1969.

<sup>249</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Informacija sa skupa organizovanog od strane Srpskog filozofskog društva pod nazivom “Kultura u socijalizmu,” November 26, 1969.

<sup>250</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Informacija o sastanku na Filozofskom fakultetu u Beogradu, December 4, 1969.

the illusion among domestic artists that they could express themselves freely, while the keepers of freedom apparently understood freedom in different ways. With the appearance of politically charged works, created in the illusory conditions mentioned above, the government made increasing use of pressure, censorship, and bans, thereby actually turning the idea of artistic and other freedoms, of the openness to the avant-garde, into something grotesque.

One question that remains unanswered in analyses of the government's relation to the arts is about why the official line grew more harsh at the end of the 1960s, growing more so through the early 1970s, and why this policy of increased pressure in Serbia started during the time that liberals were in power. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that, in those days, the essential problems had to do with—as in the eyewitness account of Latinka Perović—economic relations within the state and the question of the constitutional character of that state, and that cultural issues were thus, in her words, “a derivative issue.”<sup>251</sup> To Slavoljub Đukić, this represented a kind of paradox—the liberals were in conflict with the contemporary opposition, but in the end they were persecuted as a kind of political opposition.<sup>252</sup>

If we consider three prohibited shows—*Hats Off*, *When Pumpkins Blossomed*, and *Second Door on the Left*—that deal with varying themes, no kind of encroachment on official dogma presents itself as obvious. (The themes of these shows were, respectively, the relationship to the cult of personality, the Cominform, and the year 1968.) Because of the specific modalities of the system of censorship, it is difficult even today, despite the considerable chronological distance, to ascertain who, at an individual level, was responsible for the events that took place. Whether or not the bans in Serbia at the end of the 1960s are to cast the period of the ascendancy of the Serbian liberals in another light remains a very complicated issue, and one that calls out for further research.

The possibility, which it is hard to substantiate with documents, does exist that the liberals, by making concessions to hard-liners on issues relating to the arts, concessions in the form of bans on problematic productions, were leaving themselves room to maneuver on

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<sup>251</sup> Interview with Latinka Perović, June 19, 2010.

<sup>252</sup> Đukić, *Slom srpskih liberala. Tehnologija političkih obračuna Josipa Broza*, 133.

the much more important other battles they were also fighting, dealing with the modernization of Serbia and economic reforms. Real answers, then are probably still waiting to be found, because the prohibitions from the liberal era, almost as a rule, were followed by a kind of “quiet repentance” in the form of public polemics that were permitted to take place on the bans. In communism behind the Iron Curtain something of this type would have been inconceivable. There also remains the significant fact that the bans and arrests, as well as the job dismissals, all increased markedly in the 1970s, after the fall of the liberals. This issue was discussed already in the chapter of this book about film. At any rate, the relationship of government and culture at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s is a subject that requires more detailed analysis than is possible in this study, framed as it is by concerns about the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture.

Scrutiny of the Americanization and avantgardization of culture in Yugoslavia, and examination of censorship, give us a contradictory image of artistic life in Yugoslavia in the 1960s. Is this an image of artistic freedoms unbelievable for a socialist state, embodied by the presence of the most recent avant-garde trends of global artists, or is it a picture of control and censorship? The closest thing we can give to an accurate answer is that a Janus-like kind of politics was at work then, which presented one side of its face on foreign policy issues and the other for domestic political events. And just as the presence of the avant-garde reflected Yugoslav foreign policy and the desire of the government to show the West how liberal it was, in the same way the bans and pressure at work on the domestic art scene were expressions of domestic politics and the contradictions of Yugoslav society. In terms of artistic form, everything was permitted, from abstraction, pop art, and op art, to spitting on the public, concerts on deliberately mistuned pianos, and nudity on stage, but in terms of content, the ideology of brotherhood and unity, communist dogma, the working class, and workers’ self-management were inviolable and were protected by every means.

The presence of the avant-garde and its use proceeded, all things considered, along two tracks: the government hoped to employ the avant-garde prevent the discontent that was smoldering among the elite, while the rather considerable freedom offered by the avant-garde influenced Yugoslav artists and members of the elite to start to seek

even greater freedoms. The gain sought by the government, then also brought with it a potential disadvantage. Evidence of this is provided by a statement on the situation in the cultural world, from the meeting of the Cultural Commission of the Presidency of the LCY from July 1969: "There does exist the phenomenon of certain people understanding this freedom (of cultural and creative work) as also being freedom of intellectual and political work opposed to the policies of the League of Communists."<sup>253</sup> And that was not permitted.

Democracy and tolerance, on issues relating to the presence of cutting-edge global trends in Yugoslavia, certainly did create the illusion among domestic artists that they could express themselves freely, something that the government could ultimately not tolerate. The hopes of the artists that, after permissiveness on matters of form there would follow permissiveness on issues of substance, did incite many daring experiments, and they also produced certain results, but the power of the government, although not touching the avant-garde as such, did result in its local experiments or achievements being placed on an "index" of forbidden things when they were not to its liking. What made the famous troupe La Mama endeared to its viewers and positive as an ideal, in terms of form, also turned Aleksandar Popović into an undesirable author because of his content. The appearance of politically disputed works was the result of illusions and bravery, but their fate was Yugoslav reality. Openness to the avant-garde had, in this way, along with all of its undisputed gains for Yugoslav culture, and for Yugoslavia's standing in the world, a grotesque dimension as well, and Janus' face, from its two radically different sides, pointed out the profound schizophrenia in Yugoslav society.

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<sup>253</sup> Pašić, *Kako smo čekali Godoa*, 66.





## CHAPTER 4

# Life, American Style

Donald Duck, Marilyn Monroe, John Kennedy, Elvis Presley, James Dean, Walt Disney, Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali, Andy Warhol, Jacqueline Kennedy, Apollo 11, Coca-Cola, blue jeans, self-service, whiskey, Pepsi Cola, chewing gum, Kent cigarettes, the twist, jazz, rock and roll, Flash Gordon, Tarzan, *Dr. Kildare*, *Bonanza*, *Payton Place*, as well as *The Long*, *Hot Summer*, the Ford Mustang, Doctor Spock, “Indian burns,” “M-I-S-S-I . . .,” “pictures from America,” hula hoops, Western novels, pop art, J.D. Salinger, Jack Kerouac, the hippie movement, Woodstock, *Hair*, the sexual revolution, Herbert Marcuse, Pan American, Diners Club cards, IBM computers, Hawaiian shirts, cowboy hats, *Playboy*. In the 1960s Yugoslavia all these things could be, and for many people were, part of the content of everyday life, within the parameters of their needs, possibilities, and interests. As elements of Americanization, these symbols of America left an imprint on the most various domains, from children’s toys, entertainment, culture, education, and the news to economics and politics, spurring, hastening, and also rounding off new ways of looking at the world. Even if they were not part of a “tangible” daily world, by means of the media, primarily the press, but also radio and the nascent television industry, these elements of Americanization made their way into homes from one end of Yugoslavia to the other. Not everyone, of course, read Herbert Marcuse, and not everyone had a Diner’s Club credit card, which came into use in Yugoslavia in the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> and not all

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<sup>1</sup> According to Igor Duda, Diners Club cards began to be used in Yugoslavia in 1969 (Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 68), while the official site

women used the pill, although in the propaganda to encourage its use it was claimed that it even cured acne;<sup>2</sup> likewise not every read *Playboy* or flew around the world on one of Pan Am Boeings, but America was visibly present in everyday lives even of those people who had a negative view of the United States. The Americanization of daily life is, therefore, one of the important elements in the evolution of Yugoslavia, and it is unavoidable in rounding out the picture of Yugoslavia in the 1960s.

With Donald Duck on television before *The Long, Hot Summer*, while consuming Coca-Cola, Kents, and prepared food from self-service grocery stores, with Marcuse, Kerouac, and Dr. Spock on their bookshelves and Elvis on the record player, with “Indian burns” and hula hoops on school playgrounds, Yugoslavia—voluntarily as well as in accordance with general trends and American propaganda—was open to Americanization in all key areas of development, including childhood, youth, and the daily life of the Yugoslav family.

## The Disneyfication of Childhood

In socialist Yugoslavia, a great deal of attention was given to the raising of young people in the spirit of communism and to the cultivation of traditions from the National Liberation Struggle (NLS) in the most wide-ranging forms, from the politicization of education to the programming of free time. All pupils, by the time they were in first grade at their elementary schools, before they even had mastered the alphabet, became members of the Pioneers on the Day of the Republic, ritually repeating the Pioneer Oath and receiving their Pioneer membership booklets, which were red, just like Party membership cards. The symbols of Yugoslav reality, Tito, the Party, the Partisans, and revolution, were to be found in the names of schools, in textbooks, readers, lesson plans, and school programs.<sup>3</sup> Evidence of the ideologization of childhood is provided by the fact, for example,

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of Diners Club states that the cards came into use in Yugoslavia in 1960, [http://www.dinersclubus.com/dce\\_content/aboutdinersclub/companyhistory](http://www.dinersclubus.com/dce_content/aboutdinersclub/companyhistory).

<sup>2</sup> “Pilula sprečava pojavu bubuljica,” *Borba*, May 3, 1969, 14.

<sup>3</sup> R. Vučetić, *Život u socijalizmu 1945–1980* (Belgrade, 2011), 18–19.

that in some alphabet books the letter “m” is symbolized by the word “mama,” but the letter “t” is often represented by “Tito” and not “tata” (dad).<sup>4</sup> Generally speaking, Tito’s personality cult was visible in many various segments of childhood, something that can be seen from the articles in kids’ magazines.<sup>5</sup> Even excursions bore an ideological stamp, with groups usually retracing the “pathways of brotherhood and unity” or the “pathways of the revolution”—to Tito’s birthplace in Kumrovec, or to Jajce, Jasenovac, Sutjeska, Kozara, and so on. The unbreakable bonds between the children and the legacy of the NLS under the leadership of the Partisan movement were emphasized at every opportunity.<sup>6</sup> The worldviews of the youngest people, who as a rule are concrete and filled with curiosity and the spirit of exploration, were thus harmonized with the carefully framed ways of thinking of adults, or, better, of the government.

In a situation where war is sacralized, along with revolution, renewal, construction, and the creation of the new man, by means of vigilantly controlled schooling and privacy, there also existed, however, ways of “escaping” into childhood and youth, outside of the discipline of the Party.

Children all over Yugoslavia played Partisans and Germans, but, influenced by Western films and comic books, they also played cowboys and Indians. The great influence of movies and comics also made Tarzan a role model for many boys, who climbed around in trees and tried to conjure up the legendary Johnny Weissmuller with their calls. There was also the fairly painful children’s game called “Indian burn.” In the memories of those who experienced this, it involved twisting the skin below someone’s elbows, as if one were wringing out wash. Then the skin would be “bright red as if it were on fire, but it

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<sup>4</sup> Vučetić, “ABC Textbook and Ideological Indoctrination of Children,” 254.

<sup>5</sup> For more on the “cult of Tito” in education, see O. Milosavljević, “Otac-genije-ljubimac: Kult vladara—najtrajniji obrazac vaspitanja dece,” in *Žene i deca: Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XIX i XX veka*, 4 (Belgrade, 2006), 188–291.

<sup>6</sup> S. Petrović-Todosijević, “Na tragu bezbrižnosti pod plaštom bezimenosti: deca i detinjstvo između trajnog i novog,” in *Privatni život kod Srba u dvadesetom veku* (ed. M. Ristović, Belgrade, 2011), 235–236.

was a matter of honor not to whine and to bear up under it all with the peace and dignity of an Indian.”<sup>7</sup>

Hula hoops, another American innovation of the 1950s, were spinning, boys lifted up girls’ skirts with a triumphant cry of “pictures from America,” and girls jumped around playing gummitwist while singing the song “M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I.” Although only a small number of the people who chanted this rhyme were aware of it, this was actually an odd aspect of Americanization, or rather American influence. Namely, this set of letters, which spelled the name of the state Mississippi (although the Yugoslav version was pronounced differently), reached Yugoslavia because of one of the songs that American soldiers brought with them to Europe during the war.<sup>8</sup>

Games such as cowboys and Indians, Tarzan, hula hoops, and Indian burns demonstrated that the process of Americanization included the very young, reaching its peak, and leaving its deepest traces, in the Disneyfication of children’s socialist everyday life in Yugoslavia.

Parents and society often exert influence over children and their formation, as do the dominant ideologies that come through them.<sup>9</sup> In socialist countries, the communist ideology has no competition. Of course there certainly are parents in communist countries with firmly anticommunist convictions, but the issue is whether any of them dare to “reeducate” their children away from what has been imposed upon them by society and school. In Yugoslavia, however, because of its constant balancing act between East and West, and its perpetual openness to the West, especially on questions of popular culture, the situation was different. Children who took the Pioneer oath wore red scarves and Partisan-style caps with red stars, known as *titovke*; but they also had a childhood in which Disney’s magic was present—something that introduced them into another reality, a world of fantasy, and, as it would turn out, the world of capitalism.

Walt Disney, creator of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, definitely makes the list of American and world icons of the twentieth

<sup>7</sup> N. Opačić, “Američki san,” *Vijenac*, no. 391, February 26, 2009, [http://www.matica/hr/Vijenac/vijenac391.nsf/AllWebDocs/Americki\\_san](http://www.matica/hr/Vijenac/vijenac391.nsf/AllWebDocs/Americki_san).

<sup>8</sup> V. Arsenijević, “Ema esesa,” *Leksikon YU-mitologije* (Belgrade, 2004), 127.

<sup>9</sup> Zornado, *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology, and the Story of Childhood*, 139.

century. His huge output included films, comic books, television, Disneyland, toys, and “accompanying iconography,” such as notebooks, pencils, buttons, posters, and collectible pictures for albums, and it all penetrated the various regions of the world, which made Disney into an appropriate medium for the distribution of American propaganda.

The cooperation of Walt Disney with the American government on propaganda work began during World War II. The most striking presentation of evidence of his wartime engagement is found in the DVD collection entitled *On the Front Lines*, which contains thirty-two cartoons of propagandistic nature, by means of which Disney, using his heroes (above all Donald Duck) promoted mobilization and joining the army; Disney was also pointing out correct behavior for the home front and warning about what might happen to America if it were to lose the war. After the war, Disney assumed the role of a Cold Warrior and was among those who at the time of the persecutions of communists by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) requested that that institution strengthen its presence in Hollywood.<sup>10</sup>

His engagement in the Cold War did not stop just with the denunciation of potential communists, but extended to his active participation in cultural diplomacy. After the American administration saw quickly that radical and unadorned film propaganda about the Cold War was poorly received in Europe, there was movement in the direction of winning “hearts and souls” in a more sophisticated manner. It turned out that it was easier to seduce and enchant the world with Disney, or with films such as *Roman Holiday* and *The Wizard of Oz* than with naked Cold War rhetoric. Thus Walt Disney was on the list of film-makers from whom the U.S. government expected, and received, “friendly assistance.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to being one of the symbols of America, Disney was also one of the symbols of consumer society, on account of the wealth of products that his company offered. Consumer society also has its heroes, and it is Disney’s that are perhaps the most striking among them. Therefore it is no surprise that the process of Disneyfication is considered part of globalization and the rise of consumer society,

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<sup>10</sup> Zornado, *Inventing the Child*, 150–152.

<sup>11</sup> Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 288–289.

together with the processes of McDonaldization and Coca-Colonization, all of which are tied to consumption, to America, and to American cultural imperialism.<sup>12</sup>

Theoreticians who work on Americanization, American cultural imperialism, and globalization underscore that the basic narratives in Disney's comics reflect an imperialistic view of the world, and that his works also promote capitalist values.<sup>13</sup> One of the most important studies on this topic is *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology of the Disney Comic*, in which the authors Ariel Dorfman and Arman Mattelart show that the smiling faces of Disney heroes conceal capitalist ideology and imperialist values, that is to say, that Donald Duck is a kind of weapon of American imperialism aimed at the third world and underdeveloped countries in general.<sup>14</sup>

To illustrate these points, the authors of this study point out that in Disney's works, Donald Duck always pays for things in gold and in dollars, and then in Duckburg everyone drives good cars but also, when needed, planes, submarines, rockets, and helicopters. In Disney's comics one sees almost no one ever working, but they all are constantly buying things and enjoying the abundance of a consumer society. And the main character, Donald Duck, although depicted as a person with no job, never has any problem with his bills or with material want. What is more, surrounded by plenty, and always shopping and driving cars—he takes vacations.<sup>15</sup>

With his basic narrative lines and the nature of his characters, Walt Disney spread ideas about the American way of life that were simplified for propaganda purposes, but effective precisely because they were simple; Donald Duck was the ideal hero who, in one situation after another lived out the American dream, which in turn by means of cartoons, comic strips, books, and toys reached children across the world. America did not hide this fact, which was confirmed inter alia by the article "Donald Duck and Diplomacy" from 1950, in which the usefulness of Hollywood and American popular culture in blocking "communist imperialism" was analyzed. According to the author, Hol-

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<sup>12</sup> Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society*, 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> W.H. Marin, *How American is Globalization* (Baltimore, 2006), 49.

<sup>14</sup> Dorfman and Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64, 70-71.

lywood should be the capital city of the ideas of the Marshall Plan, where there were statesmen and humanitarians like Walt Disney and John Ford and where Donald Duck was a “world diplomat.”<sup>16</sup>

Donald Duck, then, promoter of the American dream, quickly found a foothold in postwar Yugoslav spaces as well. Disney, with Donald Duck, appeared in communist Yugoslavia in February 1951, from which time *NIN* ran a cartoon about him every week. That same year, the Party’s paper *Borba* began carrying a comic strip version of *Alice in Wonderland*, and in 1952 Donald Duck returned to the pages of *Politika* where he used to make appearances at the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup> And the *Politika Magazine* resumed publication, with Disney material, on January 5, 1952, returning to a Yugoslavia in completely changed political and ideological conditions.<sup>18</sup>

A search through the daily newspaper *Politika*’s archives, which was one of the daily print media in Yugoslavia with the highest circulation,<sup>19</sup> shows that Disney was present in this list every day in the 1960s, through Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and the column *Wonders of Nature*. This column, renamed *Unknown Nature*, was also published every day in the Zagreb paper *Vjesnik*. Alongside the publication of Disney comic strips in the daily newspapers and in *Polikin zabavnik*, another publication called *Mikijev zabavnik* began to appear, every Thursday, starting in November 1966.<sup>20</sup> The process of Disneyfication thereby grew in quantity and the existence of specialized publications of comics with Disney heroes affirmed the fact that Yugoslavia had opened its doors to Disney.

In addition to its presence in the press, Disney’s works early on began to be published in Yugoslavia as books also. The first Disney picture book in the postwar period came out in Zagreb in 1951. It was called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, and it was published by the

<sup>16</sup> W.F. Wanger, “Donald Duck and Diplomacy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1950), 443–452.

<sup>17</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 477.

<sup>18</sup> Pavković, *Naš slatki strip*, 110.

<sup>19</sup> Based on the data for 1959, *Borba* had a print run of 255,000, while *Politika*’s was 300,000. IAB, GK SKS Beograd, K-160, Informacija o korišćenju štampe, radija i televizije, February 4, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> *Politika*, October 16, 1966, 29.

company “Pionirska zastava”; then, in 1952, the Belgrade publishing house “Duga” started to bring out a series of Disney comics and picture books. In the period from 1951, when the first Disney book appeared, to 1970, 204 Disney titles were published in Yugoslavia, ranging from books to comics to picture books.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1960s the advertisements for the Disney book *World of Nature*, based on the series of his films called *True Stories from Nature*, called it “a bestseller in the Yugoslav publishing field.” The fact that “three printings of this book appeared and the 150,000 copies were sold out in record time” is evidence of its popularity and the demand for it.<sup>22</sup> The “Disneyland Library” of books also enjoyed great popularity; its backlist included *Disneyland*; *Mary Poppins*; *Wheels, Machines, and Motors*; *From Icarus to Astronauts*; and *From Rafts to Nuclear-Powered Ships*.<sup>23</sup>

Walt Disney also arrived in the up-and-coming new media of the decade, television, in addition to newspaper stands, libraries, bookstores, and movie houses. The *Disneyland* series was shown on TV starting in September 1966, and even then Donald Duck was singled out as the most positive hero with the judgment that “often in Donald Duck there is more character study, more humanity, than in the multitude of living faces whose physiognomy is delivered into our homes every evening by the small screen.”<sup>24</sup> That Donald Duck was characterized in America as a “world diplomat” on a mission to hinder “communist imperialism” while at the same time Yugoslav critics, in newspapers under the control of the communist government, saw him in an extremely positive light, is more than paradoxical. This is all the more provocative because of the critics who recognized more “humanity” than in the “multitude of living faces whose physiognomy is delivered into our homes every evening by the small screen,” since leading Yugoslav politicians were brought into homes “every evening” by the agency of the “small screen.”

<sup>21</sup> *Katalog knjiga na jezicima jugoslovenskih naroda 1868–1972*, vol. 3, 570–573; 566–578.

<sup>22</sup> *Politika*, December 11, 1966, 36.

<sup>23</sup> “Biblioteka Diznilend,” *Politika*, December 7, 1968, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Ž. Bogdanović, “Mali ekran,” *NIN*, October 9, 1966.



A series of articles points out how American cartoons, and not just those made by Disney, became part of everyday childhood existence. In 1967, for example, readers were informed that “standard American cartoons” would be on playlists, creating a situation completely at variance with that in other East European countries.<sup>25</sup> The term “standard” suggests that they, in some way, were understood as being part of a contemporary television repertory.

The popularity and high regard of Walt Disney in Yugoslavia was confirmed on the occasion of his death in 1966. There was a great deal of publicity about this event in all of the Yugoslav press, including obituaries and articles about him written by many prominent artists.<sup>26</sup> The death of this American icon served as an opportunity to remind the public of the Yugoslav prize Kekec, which was awarded to the American “master of fantasy” in 1955.<sup>27</sup>

The scope of Walt Disney’s influence on children in Yugoslavia is borne out by the fact that he and his heroes occupy a common space in the memories of entire generations growing up in Yugoslav socialism from the 1950s on. Yet Disney had an effect on Yugoslav artists, too, with the deepest impressions of that influence being on the output of the Zagreb School of cartoons and the brilliant career of the cartoonist Dušan Vukotić, the only Yugoslav ever to win an Oscar. When Disney passed away, and speaking about the beginnings of the work of the Zagreb School, Vukotić said *inter alia* that “our idol was the great Disney.” He elaborated on how, in the year when they started making their own cartoons (1950), there was no textbook in Yugoslavia about cartoons, and their only guide was an analysis of Disney’s works, which they would often watch for hours, until a handbook about the principles of animation, by Preston Blaire, reached them from America.<sup>28</sup>

Walt Disney also had a major influence on the trailblazer of Slovene comics, Miki Muster, who in 1952 began drawing anthropomorphic animals—Zvitorepec, Lakotnik, and Trdonja. The very fact that Zvitorepec existed was linked to Disney. When the Slovene children’s

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Vukotić, “Sekajući se Volta Diznija”; Milosavljević, “Jednostavno: Volt Diznij”; D. Radović, “Diznijeva pouka,” *Politika*, December 16, 1966, 11.

<sup>27</sup> D.A., “Umro Volt Dizni,” *Politika*, December 16, 1966, 11.

<sup>28</sup> D. Vukotić, “Sećajući se Volta Diznija,” *Politika*, December 18, 1966, 17.

gazette *PPP* ordered a comic from Disney in 1952 and it did not arrive on time, Muster was invited to fill the gap, and so he then created one of his three best-known figures, Zvitorepec. Later the first Slovene comic magazine was named after this character, and it appeared between 1966 and 1973.<sup>29</sup>

Walt Disney's presence in Yugoslavia expanded the process of Americanization, because, along with the Disneyfication of the everyday life of Yugoslav children, and the pluralization of children's worldviews (on the one hand Kumrovec,<sup>30</sup> on the other Duckburg; on the one hand, the Seven Enemy Offensives, on the other *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*) helped Americanization, in the political sense and with political messages, encompass all generational strata. Adults saw the American way of life in movies and TV series, in a big house with a good car parked out front, and children saw the same thing in the adventures of Donald Duck and his little nephews. Walt Disney, by his presence in Yugoslavia, reaffirmed the uniqueness of Yugoslav socialism in comparison to the other countries of the socialist world, and he also brought advantage in the area of foreign policy, as did everything connected with Americanization.

In a way similar to Disney, even if not always as effective as he was, but still important in a broad overview of Americanization, was the penetration of American comics.

## COMICS

Although comics are often synonymous with Walt Disney, they have a much longer and more complex history. Their development started at the end of the nineteenth century, and over time they would go from being entertainment for young people to a constituent element of mass culture and the object of analysis in academic studies as an authentic form of art (the so-called tenth art). And the comic was another American product, experiencing a major flourishing in the twentieth century; contributing to this in notable ways were comics about Tarzan and

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<sup>29</sup> "Miki Muster," [http://www.lambiek.net/artists/m/muster\\_miki.htm](http://www.lambiek.net/artists/m/muster_miki.htm) and <http://www.sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/zvitorepec>.

<sup>30</sup> Birthplace of Josip Broz Tito.

a range of new super heroes, whose adventures were published by the best-known American comic publishers.

According to Marshall McLuhan, the comic belongs to the world of games, the world of models and the transmission of situations from one place to another.<sup>31</sup> Kids and youth in Yugoslavia adopted mostly American models, led by the challenges of transferring situations from one place to another, for it was through their favorite comic heroes that they encountered the Wild West, as well as some of the fantastic landscapes and cities of the real or imaginary America.

Connected at the fundamental level with entertainment, comics also had a second dimension, for, as with many modes of popular culture, they were used for various purposes, including as political propaganda. As far as propaganda through comics is concerned, even by World War II heroes such as Batman, Superman, Tarzan, Flash Gordon, and Mickey Mouse were fighting against Nazi Germany and Japan, and sophisticated propaganda efforts continued into the Cold War.<sup>32</sup> The banning of American cartoons by the Italian fascists is evidence of the importance of comics and the juxtaposition of one part of the world with another, or over against another; owing to public pressure, though, the Italians were forced to permit the return of Popeye to the pages of its media publications. American comics were also prohibited in Nazi Germany.<sup>33</sup>

During the Cold War, comic heroes—given the new challenges on the international scene—became to a greater or lesser degree uncompromising anticommunists. The comic book *Is This Tomorrow?*, which appeared in 1947 in a print run of four million copies, contained terrifying visions of America in the event of a communist victory, with a front cover in which the American flag was going up in flames. In American comics, Captain America, Superman, Iron Man, and T-Man all fought against communists.<sup>34</sup> A large number of comics depicting

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<sup>31</sup> M. Makluan, *Poznavanje opštila—čovekovih produžetaka* (Belgrade, 1971, 219.

<sup>32</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 104. Tomić, *Strip: poreklo i znacaj*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, 103.

<sup>34</sup> S. Heller, "Cold War Design: Battling the Red Menace," [http://www.heller-books.com/pdfs/print\\_coldwardesign.pdf](http://www.heller-books.com/pdfs/print_coldwardesign.pdf).

the danger of a nuclear catastrophe and battles in space were also published, as well as many about the wars in Korea and Vietnam.<sup>35</sup>

Regardless of the anticommunist activities of American comic heroes, they made a breakthrough into the Yugoslav market soon after Tito's conflict with Stalin. If one takes into account the fact that comics are the first reading experience for most children all over the globe, it follows that comics exposed children in the Yugoslav socialist society, even with their earliest experiences as readers, to American influences, and guided them toward acceptance not only of American popular culture but also of the capitalist way of life, which was on obvious display in the majority of American comics.

The penetration of American comic had begun, however, much earlier. The comic strip was another of the phenomena of American popular culture that was present back in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Even in the 1930s, many daily newspapers but also many specialized publications dedicated to "the ninth art" carried the comics *Buck Rogers* (the first American science fiction comic), *Betty Boop*, *Bim and Bum*, *Detective X-9* (the most famous comic in the detective genre), *Jim of the Jungle*, *The Phantom*, *Flash Gordon*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Donald Duck*, *Popeye*, *Superman*, and *Tarzan*.<sup>36</sup> *Politikin zabavnik*, in the first phase of its publication from February 20, 1939 to April 4, 1941, included *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* from its first issue, and from among these favorite characters already mentioned it carried *Jim of the Jungle*, *Brick Bradford*, and *Popeye*.<sup>37</sup>

Comics remained on the scene, perhaps because of their popularity in prewar Yugoslavia, during the war itself; they were present among the Partisans, who would print short satirical messages about Hitler, with the comment "read this and pass it on." The new era and new ideology, as they were established after World War II, initially evinced no understanding of American popular culture because of the complete orientation toward Moscow. Comics suffered. By 1945 three book-

<sup>35</sup> K. Murphy, "Super Heroes and Cold War Warriors," <http://suite101.com/content/super-heroes-as-cold-warriors-a155917>.

<sup>36</sup> Draginčić and Zupan, *Istorija jugoslovenskog stripa*, 1, [http://www.rastko.rs.strip/1/zupan-dragincic\\_1/indix\\_1.html](http://www.rastko.rs.strip/1/zupan-dragincic_1/indix_1.html); V. Pavković, *Naš slatki strip*, 109–115.

<sup>37</sup> Pavković, *Naš slatki strip*, 109.

lets of the comic *Three Scoundrels During the Occupation* were banned “because of grave offenses to morale and fomenting of criminality.”<sup>38</sup> At that time the characters Flash Gordon and Mandrake also met with sharp criticism, but after racking their brains about how the “ninth art” might be able to survive, domestic authors made comics such as *Ratko the Shock Worker, Communist of Steel*, who held up in format the tradition of exactly those American super-heroes who had been denounced, only “packaged” now with the desired ideological content.<sup>39</sup>

Attacks on comics in Yugoslavia were not typical just for socialist countries. In the 1950s comics endured blows in America, England, France, Spain, and Italy, where they were labeled “a social ill” while in Yugoslavia it received the label, and disqualification, that they were a product of “petty bourgeois, consumerist, and philistine psychology.”<sup>40</sup> Accusations of violence, which buffeted comics in Yugoslavia were also leveled in America, where the Senate even discussed the harmful impact of comics on young people; it was concerned with the negative effect of comics on the psyche, as well as on questions that edged into the realm of sexuality, such as why Batman, for instance, was always seen with Robin and never with a girl.<sup>41</sup> The ideological rigidity of socialism and the conservatism of part of America often had the same “targets,” for both socialism and conservatism, in many respects, are the expression of a dogmatic mind, something that manifests itself in the case of comics.

In the new situation that evolved after the break from Moscow, the Yugoslav market again opened to comics, which, after a short-lived period of persecution, reappeared at the beginning of the 1950s. In Croatia, after the persecutions of 1945/1946, comics made a timid return in 1950, with the gathering together of comic artists and a few Western stories by Andrija Maurović.<sup>42</sup> The newspaper *Vjesnik* in Zagreb reported on the appearance of comics as early as 1951.<sup>43</sup> This publisher

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<sup>38</sup> S. Ivkov, “60 godina stripa u Srbiji,” [http://www.rastko.rs/stripi/60godina/60gstripa\\_03.html](http://www.rastko.rs/stripi/60godina/60gstripa_03.html).

<sup>39</sup> Marković, *Beograd izmedju Istoka i Zapada*, 476.

<sup>40</sup> Tomić, *Strip: poreklo i znacaj*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Jakovina, *Američki komunistički savezni*, 459.

<sup>42</sup> “60 godina hrvatskog stripa,” <http://comics.cro.net/hrtstr2.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik*, 459.

launched its first all-comic publication the next year, the *Vjesnikov zabavnik*, but it folded quickly. Subsequently their appeared two other short-lived publications, *Petko* (1952/1953) and *Mickey Cartoons* (1954). But *Plavi Vjesnik* (1954–1973) marked the real rise of comics in Croatia. This publication carried Disney comics, *Prince Valiant*, *Brick Bradford*, *Robin Hood*, *Flash Gordon*, *Tarzan*, and many others by American, English, and Italian authors. In addition, at the peak of its popularity *Plavi Vjesnik* also had comics made by domestic authors, such as the brothers Norbert and Valter Nojbauer, as well as “the father of the Croatian comic,” Andrija Maurović, who was also, in the judgment of many critics, the most popular comic writer in all of Yugoslavia.<sup>44</sup>

By 1951 the first comic reviews, *Naš Strip* and *Strip: ilustrovani zabavni list u stripu*, were on the scene in Serbia. At the end of the 1950s, Yugoslav comics got a boost with the founding of *Dečije novine* (1957), and, in the same year, Borba published the first issue of *Kekec*. Although it is hard to prove the political influence on the development of comics in Yugoslavia, one episode from the history of comics does speak to its immediate sway over desirable models that were supposed to be adopted. When, for instance, the publication *Kekec* was founded, in a year of great Soviet triumphs in space (*Sputnik* and sending the dog Laika into the cosmos), the founders of this magazine for kids had the idea of naming it Laika. A stormy reaction to this decision ensued at the top of the political hierarchy, and before the first issue came out it was renamed *Kekec*.<sup>45</sup> Many cartoons by foreign authors also ran in *Kekec*, among them Disney’s *The Lady and the Tramp* and *Peter Pan*, as well as *Prince Valiant*.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1960s comics were certainly available in specialized journals, but they were also present in nearly all Yugoslav print media, and for that reason this decade is considered the golden age of comics in Yugoslavia. Print runs reached fantastic heights relative to the number of inhabitants, because in a country of around eighteen million people cartoons were printed in excess of twelve million copies.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> “Plavi vjesnik,” <http://stripforum.hr/leksikon/magazain/plavi-vjesnik@2>.

<sup>45</sup> *Kekec* was a boy-hero from Slovene literature and was already famous because of the cartoon of the same name from 1951.

<sup>46</sup> Pavković, *Naš slatki strip*, 116.

<sup>47</sup> Tomić, *Strip: poreklo i značaj*, 10.

In addition to specialized papers dedicated to comics, and alongside many Pioneer and youth reviews, comics were also published in the daily and weekly press. In *TV Novosti* they ran from issue to issue (*The Maverick Brothers*, *Texas Jack*, *Love in Las Vegas*, *Tom Micks*, etc.), and *Ilustrovana politika* devoted one page to comics. Many daily newspapers published comics every day; thus, for example, *Politika ekspres* featured the “comic of the year,” *Modesty Blaise*, every day in 1966. In the mid-1960s, *Mikijev almanah* published editions of “thin volumes of imported cartoons” from the Marvel agency in the United States, which occurred in Yugoslavia before it did in some of the countries of Western Europe, like France, which “defended itself” against Americanization via an embargo on imported comics from the United States.<sup>48</sup>

Comic lovers identify 1968 as one of the key moments in the history of comics in Yugoslavia. That is when *Dnevnik*, in Novi Sad, inaugurated two noteworthy comic series, *Golden Series* (1968–1992) and *Lunov Magnus Strip* (1968–1993), in which appeared *Tex Wheeler*, *Zagor*, *Tim Dusty*, and *Lun—the King of Midnight*. Although it was mostly comics by Italian authors that appeared in these series, people were talking of a particular, “indirect” Americanization, as was the case with “spaghetti Westerns,” because the plots of these comics took place largely in the Wild West or in North America (*Captain Mark*, *Zagor*).<sup>49</sup> A similarly “indirect” Americanization ensued later as well, especially with the Italian comic *Alan Ford*, which was set in New York.<sup>50</sup>

The well-known cinematic and comic hero Tarzan was also on movie screens and newspaper stands across Yugoslavia, and by the 1960s he was making his way into bookstores and libraries. There were five compilations of his adventures, written by E.R. Burrows, printed in representative covers. One could purchase these books on credit, in ten installments, the same way that the most venerable classics of world and domestic literature were sold, and they were presented to all generations with the remark that they were the “favorite of youth

<sup>48</sup> Ivkov, “60 godina stripa u Srbiji.”

<sup>49</sup> See <http://stripovi2.tripod.com>, [http://sr.wikipedia.org/sr/Lunov\\_Magnus\\_Strip](http://sr.wikipedia.org/sr/Lunov_Magnus_Strip), [http://www.leksikon.yu-mitologije.net/read.php\\_id=901](http://www.leksikon.yu-mitologije.net/read.php_id=901).

<sup>50</sup> *Alan Ford* first appeared in Yugoslavia in 1972, published in *Vjesnik* in Zagreb.



around the globe,” and the book versions were “worthy gift for children, and relaxation and amusement for you.”<sup>51</sup>

In short order both comics and movies, along with almost everything else representing Americanization and orientation to the West, began to work for communism—the authorities of the Agitprop agency themselves recognized that official publications for young people published comics because otherwise no one would buy them.<sup>52</sup> Accepting the idea that American cartoons would be “bait” for domestic political content, the government seemed to be demonstrating a firm belief in its own policies and ideology and in their superiority. By the second half of the 1950s, cartoons in Yugoslavia had overrun all types of Pioneer and youth publications, but also those of the military. The government “rectified” this situation by stimulating the creation of domestic comics, on domestic themes. Thus a contest for comics was announced in the military review *Narodna armija* at the start of 1956, on topics that were determined in advance: “our national liberation struggle, our history, and the life of contemporary soldiers.” Meanwhile, the paper *Krila armije* ran a comic called *Saboteurs*.<sup>53</sup> In the organ of veterans of the NLS, called *July 4*, Ivo Kušanić (*Majstorije druga Srećka*) and Ivica Koljanin (*Nesalomljivi*) placed their works.<sup>54</sup> This unique kind of “repayment of debt” to Western popular culture, more specifically to American, often boiled down, in the case of comics, to copying Western ones, with varying degrees of success.

Subjects from the NLS, which was one of the propaganda levers of Yugoslav socialism, used in conjunction with “American weaponry” as in the case of rock and roll and, even more so, of “Partisan Westerns,” cropped up in Yugoslav cartoons until the mid-1980s. In the 1950s and 1960s, popularizing the achievements of the NLS, comics such as *The Adventures of Nikoletina Bursać*, *Young Communists from the Little Bay*, *The Messenger of Fifth Company*, *Partisan Stories*, and *A Life for Freedom* originated. The greatest achievement was in the comic *Mirko and Slavko*, whose heroes were boys, couriers for the Partisans, who

<sup>51</sup> Advertisement for Tarzan books, *Politika*, June 6, 1965, 32.

<sup>52</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 477.

<sup>53</sup> Zupan, *Strip u Srbiji, 1955–1972*.

<sup>54</sup> Ivkov, “60 godina stripa u Srbiji”; *Nesalomljivi* appeared simultaneously in both *July 4* and *Vjesnik*.



fought valiantly against the Germans. This comic first appeared in the series *Nikad robom* (1963–1979), in which appeared comics on subjects from various periods of Yugoslav history. Because of the great popularity of the protagonists Mirko and Slavko, and because the print runs for their comics reached 200,000, they began appearing in 1969 in a different format, in their own eponymous edition.<sup>55</sup>

In the adoption of an American form for “packaging” socialist content, comics went even further than, for example, “Partisan Westerns,” because the faces of Mirko and Slavko, exactly as it was done in America with popular comic heroes, were printed on t-shirts, notebooks, covers for pupils’ textbooks, and schoolbags, and there was even a feature film about them, *Mirko and Slavko*, made in 1973.

There was more to Americanization than the “Partisan” comics as a new genre and as the “Yugoslavization” of American popular culture; local authors, and the subjects they chose, also clearly pointed to Americanization. Take, for example, the case of Jovan Stojanović, who published, under the pseudonym John Radley, the comics *Cowboy Jim* and *Showdown at Sand Creek*, or that of Miroslav Cvetković, who published comics under the nom-de-plume Mickey Flowers.<sup>56</sup> This kind of Americanization was surely dictated by commercial motives, or in other words, the awareness of author and publisher of the public’s wishes.

All in all, the 1960s saw comics—whether one is thinking of *Tarzan* or *Mirko and Slavko*—become omnipresent. They were a phenomenon of the twentieth century, and as such were inseparable from popular culture and unavoidable in the editorial policies of print media. Although there were people who periodically raised objections to comics, characterizing them as entertainment that was harmful to young people, they did not come under great pressure, perhaps precisely for the reason that comics could also work for the system. Conversely, the popularity of comics made them very profitable, and it is obvious that many publishing houses, like film distributors, often put profit ahead of ideology, another one of the strange capitalist habits to be found in this communist society.

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<sup>55</sup> Zupan, *Strip u Srbiji, 1955–1972*.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Real attacks on comics emerged only at the beginning of the 1970s, and they did not have an ideological basis. This kind of literature was on the receiving end of attacks against “kitsch and trashy literature.” A law against “kitsch and trash” was passed in 1971 and went into effect on July 1, 1972, and it dealt a heavier and longer-lasting blow to comics than did the ideological attacks from the brief post-war period. This is another of the issues that should come in for research as part of the cultural and social history of the 1970s.

#### “ENTERTAINMENT LITERATURE”

A specific current in the popular culture of the twentieth century, connected to reading but distinct from comics, was comprised of detective stories and Western novels, which after spreading out from America became a world and planetary phenomenon. The Yugoslav public was also able to read the hit novels of this period, because Yugoslav publishers followed recent American literature and the best-seller lists there, so that titles that figured among the most often read books of the twentieth century reached Yugoslav readers. The decade began with the resonance of the novel *Payton Place*, published in translation in Zagreb in 1959, just three years after the appearance of the first American edition. This book, which gained tremendous popularity in America, and which formed the basis of a film of the same name, probably garnered its strongest reaction in Yugoslavia in the form of the TV series, which was shown beginning at the end of 1969. Many American detective novels and Westerns became a much bigger presence because of films, and a popular series of detective books (“Zelena biblioteka”) included the novel *The Trouble with Harry*, on which Alfred Hitchcock directed a film of the same name.<sup>57</sup> The reading public also lavished attention on Truman Capote’s novel *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, which at the moment of its publication in 1968 was already enjoying cult status with Yugoslav audiences because of its film version; the novel received excellent reviews in the press.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> M. Maksimović, *Ilustrovana politika*, February 23, 1960, 39.

<sup>58</sup> The movie *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (dir. Blake Edwards, 1961) had its Yugoslav premier in 1965.

Besides following “the official trends” in American literature—from classics to provocative modern authors such as John Updike and Henry Miller—a considerable portion of American literature found itself in a kind of gray zone. It fell into the category of “entertainment literature” (so-called X-novels or roto-novels), which young people were especially happy to read but which is today almost completely inaccessible for analysis. In fact these novels do not figure in the statistics on best-read books, and neither are they to be found in library catalogues, although many analyses of the ideological commissions attest to their presence; these commissions dealt with the problem of “kitsch and trashy literature,” as well as with issues facing young people. The danger coming from such literature was specified as early as 1951:

There exists the danger that our publishing houses will go down the path of publishing sensationalistic, crime-based, and pornographic literature which appeals to the superficial and insufficiently developed taste of a wide range of readers...Therefore more and more sensationalist, criminal, and reactionary comics, as well as pornographic illustrations and detective novels have been appearing recently in our bookstores and at newspaper stands.<sup>59</sup>

Data about print runs for popular literature books is evidence of the fact that this kind of literature was reaching an ever greater public, beginning with its rise in the 1950s. These runs range “from 25–35,000, which sold out completely.”<sup>60</sup>

We know that these X-novels had an exceptionally large readership because of surveys in newspapers, over and above the relative sharp criticism of the genre to be found in ideological commissions. When high school students were surveyed about what they most often read, they listed detective novels, top Westerns, Pony Westerns, X-100 novels, photo-novels, black series, and Zelena biblioteka, and so on.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> AJ, KMJ-II-6-d/9, 1951, Informacija Saveta za nauku i kulturu o stanju izdavačke delatnosti

<sup>60</sup> AJ, 142-33-02-40/2, Izdavačka delatnost i organizacija plasmana knjige, April 1961.

<sup>61</sup> “Sta čitaju mladi,” *Bazar*, vol. 6, no. 106, February 15, 1969, 34.

Nor could the serious weeklies, such as *NIN*, stand their ground against this literary genre, and so in nearly every issue they published some crime story, and after 1962 *NIN* ran a set of American detective stories titled "What Hitchcock Has Picked for You."

In the 1960s, there was a genuine flourishing of the production of this kind of popular literature. Belgrade's "Duga," Novi Sad's "Dnevnik," and Zagreb's "Privreda" published annually 116 detective novels in a circulation of 3.3 million copies. Popular novels were also marketed as individual volumes that were released several times a week; the leading publishers for these were "Lykos" of Zagreb, "Slobodna Dalmacija" from Split, and "Večer" from Maribor. Readers also received them in serial format in daily newspapers; "Politika" alone published about 150 such titles per year.<sup>62</sup> In information available from 1970/71, when the print runs of this kind of "literature" reached their peak, 71 series of pulp thrillers and comics appeared, in 2,140 editions, with an annual print run of 90,467,000!<sup>63</sup>

Frequently labeled "trashy," this kind of literature, in which American detective novels and Westerns were most prominently represented, reached "even the most remote places in our country," and statistics note that "there are students who read as many as 100 detective or Western novels per year."<sup>64</sup> According to the results of a survey by the Library of the City of Belgrade, conducted with 2,500 students from 120 elementary schools, the most-read books were *Winnetou* and *Davy Crockett*. One of the questions from this survey confirmed from the source of the popularity these entertainment and adventure novels— young people sought them out for entertainment and as a hobby, and they were not reading them "for the sake of acquiring knowledge."<sup>65</sup>

Josip Broz Tito weighed in on the flood of trash-literature, as these novels were often referred to even in the newspapers that published them, in 1963 with the admonition that "literature like this has a very bad influence on youth."<sup>66</sup> However, as was the case with the majority of other "admonitions" from Tito in connection with popular, or even

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 242.

<sup>64</sup> "Lektira osnovaca," *Politika*, June 16, 1965, 8.

<sup>65</sup> B. Jovanović, "Vinetu—najčitaniji," *Borba*, January 8, 1963, 7.

<sup>66</sup> "Govor druga Tita na Kongresu omladine," *Borba*, January 24, 1963, 2.

high, culture, no resolute moves followed; young people continued to read “trash-literature,” transporting themselves from the world of workers’ self-management to the world of the prairies, the Wild West, and the saloon—and also into neighborhoods in New York and Chicago as well as the reaches of outer space.

The large print runs and high numbers of readers could of course have influenced Yugoslav writers. There are, however, no reliable traces of the results of such influences. In this regard comics were apparently more influential. But there did exist domestic authors whose novels, in ways similar to Western detective stories, were published by newspaper companies as “black series” or “green libraries,” or in installments. Conceptualization of the actual influence of this genre on Yugoslavian artists has unique limitations; for instance, determining the authorship of detective novels published at the time is difficult, because so many domestic authors “hid” behind Anglo-American names so that their works would sell better.<sup>67</sup> One of the pre-eminent authors was Nenad Bixy, a Croatian journalist, writer, and translator of the comic strip *Alan Ford*. He was famous for a series of detective novels about a hero named Timothy Thatcher, in which the plot was transferred to the West, but he also penned a detective novel on domestic themes in a domestic setting, *Zagrebačka veza* (Zagreb connection).<sup>68</sup>

One additional facet of “readers’ Americanization” is connected with the Yugoslav attitude toward *Playboy*, the well-known American magazine “for men.” The first copies of *Playboy* could be found at magazine stands around Yugoslavia in the spring of 1969. *Politika* marked that moment on its page dedicated to culture, explaining that in addition to domestic magazines for men (*Start*, *Magazin*, *Eva i Adam*, *Čik*) there were also foreign “men’s magazines” in Yugoslavia—*Playboy*, *Lui*, *Playman*, and *Penthouse*.<sup>69</sup>

In this aspect of daily life Yugoslavia was once again completely at variance with the Soviet Union and other countries behind Iron Curtain. In *The Spirit of Time*, Edgar Morin stressed that it was almost impossible to imagine erotica in the USSR and China; that is to say,

<sup>67</sup> Mandić, *Šok sadašnjosti*, 151.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.; “Nenad Bixy,” [http://www.hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nenad\\_Bixy](http://www.hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nenad_Bixy)

<sup>69</sup> “Seksualno obrazovanje,” *Politika*, September 12, 1969, 12.

erotica was a suppressed image, framed secretly in personal life.<sup>70</sup> When it came to erotic/pornographic magazines, access was reduced to underground channels and to so-called *sexizdat*, while, from the point of view of the West, sex in the USSR was *terra incognita*.<sup>71</sup> The making of photographs and films with erotic content was penalized by the Criminal Code, according to which the introduction of materials containing “pornography” into the USSR was also strictly forbidden. Censors even forbade the description of the sexual act in literature, and all of these bans, connected with natural curiosity, meant that Soviet citizens on official trips to the “capitalist” countries tried to acquire, or at least look at, erotic and pornographic magazines.<sup>72</sup> Although Yugoslavia also did not, formally, open its door to pornography (and, by the way, neither did many Western countries), erotic content in Yugoslav spaces was obviously accessible.

Seeking to explain the Yugoslav openness in regard to displays of sexuality, *Politika* emphasized that the appearance of *Playboy* was “praiseworthy” because of the struggle against patriarchal morality and as a challenge “to traditional norms of behavior.” Furthermore *Playboy* was held up as a model for other domestic magazines, because the writing in it was “not superficial”; it was a magazine for serious topics, and it often included interviews with personalities such as McLuhan, Kubrick, Norman Mailer, and Peter Brook, and so on.<sup>73</sup>

The question remains of whether this degree of open sexuality, and after to the American model at that, worked for Yugoslav socialism, but at any rate it is certain that “sexual openness” in Yugoslavia made life under socialism more interesting and more similar to life in the West. By deciding to allow magazines like *Playboy*, *Lui*, and *Penthouse* onto the Yugoslav market, as well as by printing Henry Miller’s works uncensored, which at the time was not even possible in America, the Yugoslav government demonstrated to the West, but also to the East, another kind of modernity and openness.

Everything, then, from the American literary scene was also available to Yugoslav readers. This included the broadest cross-section of things,

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<sup>70</sup> Moren, *Duh vremena*, vol. 1, 143.

<sup>71</sup> “Behavior: Sex in the Kremlin’s Shadow,” *Time*, July 23, 1979.

<sup>72</sup> I thank Dr. Alexei Timofeyev for these points.

<sup>73</sup> “Seksualno obrazovanje,” *Politika*, September 12, 1969, 12.

from children's literature and young adult fiction, to best-selling novels, detective stories, Westerns, erotic and (semi)pornographic magazines, all way to the apex of contemporary American literature. These writings were able to form a part of everyday existence for Yugoslav readers. Thus we see how all strata of society were Americanized, because every person could find something in the welter of genres that interested him or her, whether in the library or at the magazine kiosk, in the most remote regions of Yugoslavia. Both in the realm of elite publishers, as in the "gray zone," America had a visible spot, considerably larger by dint of Yugoslav interests and needs than because of its own activities the way they found expression in other currents of Americanization.

## The Coca-Colonization of Youth

When we think about communists,  
the Iron Curtain comes to mind.  
But when they think about democracy,  
they think of Coca-Cola.<sup>74</sup>

In people's views of the twentieth-century United States, Coca-Cola is present as one of America's symbols and as the embodiment of its values. It is the most recognized trademark in the world, and therefore it is a unique indicator of contradictory and irreconcilable ways of experiencing America—for those who appreciate America, Coca-Cola means economic and political freedom and democracy, while for America's opponents it personifies cruel global capitalism and the watering down of local culture and particularity in an Americanized culture of mediocrity.<sup>75</sup> According to Richard Kuisel, no other commercial product has ever been more closely associated with America than Coke.<sup>76</sup> In this sense, then, it is at once both an economic fact

<sup>74</sup> Poster from a conference organized by the Coca-Cola Company in 1948: Stendidž, *Istorija sveta u 6 pića*, 178.

<sup>75</sup> Stendidž, *Istorija sveta u 6 pića*, 158.

<sup>76</sup> R.F. Kuisel, "Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face Americanization, 1948–1953," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1991), 97.

and a metric of political moods—as well as a culturological phenomenon and a means of propaganda.

The history of Coca-Cola extends back to the nineteenth century, when in 1886 a pharmacist from Atlanta, John Pemberton, created a recipe for the syrup from which the drink is made. Although, to judge from the first advertisements, this invention was supposed to serve to “stimulate the mind,” time showed that the utility and value of this drink went far beyond “stimulating the mind” by being “completely delicious,” “refreshing,” and “an invigorating drink,” as the adverts had it in its first year of existence.<sup>77</sup> The beverage in fact made a global economic giant out of the Coca-Cola Company, and it became an unavoidable propaganda factor for America as a world power.

The penetration of Coca-Cola into the European market began in the early 1930s, and this was followed by a real commercial boom with the spread of World War II. Coca-Cola was used then to raise the morale of American soldiers, and to expand American influence by broadening the American market. The company’s policy was that “every soldier get a bottle of Coke for five cents wherever he is, and however much it costs [the company],” and besides ordinary soldiers and local populations in the vicinity of American bases, Coca-Cola was drunk during the war by Generals Douglas McArthur, Omar Bradley, and George Patton. Coke’s war propaganda dimension resulted in the setting up of sixty-four mini-factories around the world, from which, in the maelstrom of the hostilities, ten million bottles of Coke were supplied.<sup>78</sup>

After the conclusion of the war, the process of Coca-colonization kicked in. In Europe production of the drink began in 1947 in Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and by 1949 it had arrived in Switzerland, Italy, and France as well.<sup>79</sup> From the start Coca-Cola was inseparably bound up with marketing, consumer society, and the free market, or, as the long-serving president of the Coca-Cola company, Robert Woodruff, used to say, in every bottle of Coke the “essence

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>78</sup> Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, 53; Stendidž, *Istorija sveta u 6 pića*, 175–176.

<sup>79</sup> Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, 53.



of capitalism” was hiding.<sup>80</sup> To put it more simply, Coca-Cola was a symbol of America and a symbol of capitalism, things that strengthened the role it was to play in the Cold War and that made the expansion of the market of Coca-Cola a matter not just of the growth in the number of factories around the world but also another of the Cold War’s battles for “hearts and souls.”

A joke from the era of the space race attests to the presence of Coke in Cold War circumstances. Richard Nixon has just been told that the Russians have made a mission to the moon and have painted the entire thing red. So Nixon calls up NASA immediately and, upon receiving a report that Americans are also just about to go to the moon, he issues the order to take along white paint and over the Russian’s red paint to write “Coca-Cola.”<sup>81</sup> In addition to being about the Cold War, this joke also tells us that Coca-Cola was the most prominent American symbol, or in other words the symbol of an American product for everyday life that could easily and completely destroy the symbol of communism, the color red.

Because of the broadening of American influence through the recognizable little bottles of Coca-Cola, the term Coca-colonization came into being, which refers to globalization and cultural colonization, by which we mean the export of Western (primarily American) goods and the invasion of Western (primarily American) cultural values, which threaten local cultures. The very term *Coca-colonization* has been in use since 1949/1950, and is associated with writings in the communist press in France, from the time when French communists initiated a campaign against the founding of factories for bottling Coke in their country.<sup>82</sup> There were rumors of communist attacks on Coca-Cola in Austria in 1950, and it was similar in other countries where communist parties were strong.<sup>83</sup> The term crossed over into historical scholarship in 1994, with Reinhold Wagnleitner’s *Coca-Colonization and the Cold*

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>81</sup> “Coca-Cola—Globalizacija na dijelu,” <http://forum.banjaluka.com/view-topic.php?f=43&t=48204>.

<sup>82</sup> Stendidz, *Istorija sveta u 6 pića*, 178–179.

<sup>83</sup> Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, xiii.

*War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War.*<sup>84</sup>

In the Coca-colonization of the world by a product that was the symbol of both America and capitalism, the spread of this drink to communist countries, in which governments carried out an in-depth campaign against it, played a special role.

The penetration of Coca-Cola into the East European market started in Bulgaria, which in 1965 became the first country of the East Bloc in which this “capitalist” beverage appeared.<sup>85</sup> In that year a Cyrillic logo was also created in Bulgaria for Coke, and it was accompanied by the slogan “Everything is better with Coca-Cola.”<sup>86</sup> Coke was produced in factories in Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, Ruse, and Burgas, although, until the fall of communism, despite the factories that produced it Coke remained an underproduced item in this communist country and it was never found in abundance. Formally the force behind the decision to produce Coca-Cola was the export-import company TEKSIM, but it is clear, considering how far behind the Iron Curtain Bulgaria lay, that such a decision could not be made without the approval of the highest level of the state, that is, of Todor Zhivkov. The decision was likely motivated by Sofia’s efforts to liberalize its economy and improve the standard of living of the population amid the wave of “thawing” which had started in the middle of the 1960s. The American magazine *Time* reported it this way when it mentioned the appearance of Coca-Cola on the Bulgarian market.<sup>87</sup>

The fact that Coca-Cola reached Bulgaria first drew cries of amazement from the inhabitants of Yugoslavia, who were used to having a “privileged” position behind the Iron Curtain in everything related to the rest of the world. The memoirs of the rock musician and composer Zoran Simjanović support this idea. When he gave a guest appearance in Bulgaria in 1966, he said: “In Bulgaria we could only buy classical music albums, *Pliska* cognac, and—you won’t believe

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<sup>84</sup> This book was published by the University of North Carolina Press (Chapel Hill and London) in 1994.

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.en.coca-colahellenic.bg/Aboutus/History>.

<sup>86</sup> “Bulgaria: The Thaw That Refreshes,” *Time*, December 3, 1965 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,842285,00.html>.

<sup>87</sup> “Bulgaria: The Thaw That Refreshes.”

this—Coca-Cola. How and why Coca-Cola made it to Bulgaria before Yugoslavia is still not clear to me, but it is here that we drank Coke for the first time.”<sup>88</sup> In short order Yugoslavia did, however, become the second country in the socialist world to receive this beverage.

With the exception of the Bulgarian example, the breakthrough of Coca-Cola in East European markets did not occur easily, and the company’s director explained communist antagonism toward the drink with the comment that Coca-Cola was the very essence of capitalism, so that resistance to it on the part of communists seemed extremely logical.<sup>89</sup> In Poland, which was, in comparison to other countries behind the Iron Curtain, more open to Western trends, Coca-Cola cropped up in 1972,<sup>90</sup> while Pepsi Cola was arrived first in the Soviet Union (in 1972 it received an exclusive license),<sup>91</sup> along with an arrangement for a kind of “reciprocity”—so that the Russian vodka Stolichnaya could be sold in the United States.<sup>92</sup>

Pepsi-Cola had, indeed, already appeared in the Soviet Union in 1959, at the American exhibition in Moscow, when free samples were offered to visitors and even Khrushchev tried some.<sup>93</sup> Because of the reception it received, Pepsi-Cola was considered the big hit of the entire American exhibition.<sup>94</sup> Coke had to wait longer for its chance in the USSR—it only arrived in 1985.<sup>95</sup> Despite apparent opposition to this drink in the East Bloc, the American magazine *Time* reported that in the middle of the 1960s Coca-Cola could be purchased in Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, in the last case imported from West Germany—above all for the satisfaction of foreign tourists.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Simjanović, *Kako sam postao (I pretao) da budem roker*, 147.

<sup>89</sup> Stendidž, *Istorija sveta u 6 pića*, 179.

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.en.coca-colahellenic.pl/Aboutus/History>.

<sup>91</sup> The company’s website states that Pepsi-Cola was the first American product to be produced in the USSR: “The Pepsi-Cola Story,” [http://www.pepsi.com/PepsiLegacy\\_Book.pdf](http://www.pepsi.com/PepsiLegacy_Book.pdf).

<sup>92</sup> “Wooing the Next Pepsi Generation,” *Spiegel*, October 19, 2007. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,512366,00.html>.

<sup>93</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 175, 179.

<sup>94</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*.

<sup>95</sup> “Soviets to Allow Coca-Cola for Sale,” *New York Times*, January 24, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/24/business/soviet-to-allow-coca-cola-sale.html>.

<sup>96</sup> “Bulgaria: The Thaw That Refreshes.”

In Yugoslavia, the production of beverages similar to Coca-Cola was launched in 1953, when the company Slovenija-vino opened its first factory for Kokta and Judi. Subsequently Pepsi-Cola showed up. Its history goes back to 1898, and it had experienced an upsurge in the 1930s, becoming a serious rival to Coke.<sup>97</sup> The arrival of Pepsi-Cola in Yugoslavia was hinted at in the summer of 1964 in articles in the press saying that in Bukovička Banja new equipment was being set up to exploit mineral water “in the most up-to-date way”; the machines had been obtained in America, and, with American support, they were used to modernize the production of the mineral water Knjaz Miloš, which represents a special kind of Americanization of a Serbian brand. Along with the point that Pepsi, “the famous refreshing drink,” was made by Pepsi Cola International in 102 different countries, it was announced that it would soon be supplied from Bukovička Banja.<sup>98</sup>

Preparations for the move of Pepsi-Cola into the Yugoslav market lasted three years, and then the first bottles of the beverage appeared on April 27, 1966. The factory in Bukovička Banja delivered on that first day 50,000 bottles for sale in the small city of Arandelovac, and later that same evening it was possible to find them in Belgrade. Although Pepsi-Cola was produced in Serbia, this American product had a Yugoslav character, because the bottles were made in a glass factory in Paraćin (Serbia), the caps in the Ljubljana concern named Plutal (Slovenia), and the crates in Ajdovščina (Slovenia), and also Kavadarci (Macedonia).

Once it was for sale, an ad campaign also started, focused on Pepsi as “the most pleasant non-alcoholic soft drink.”<sup>99</sup> In the press it was emphasized that Pepsi-Cola in Yugoslavia was first “in this part of Europe,” and it was announced that production of Pepsi was gearing up in factories located in Makarska, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, “providing for coverage of the entire Yugoslav market.”<sup>100</sup>

It was obvious that this drink immediately took the lead over other, similar drinks. Newspapers reported this. *Ilustrovana politika*, for instance, organized a taste-test for the soft drinks that were at that

<sup>97</sup> “The Pepsi-Cola Story,” [http://www.pepsi.com/PepsyLegacy\\_Book.pdf](http://www.pepsi.com/PepsyLegacy_Book.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> “Pod Bukuljom: Knjaz Miloš i Pepsi kola,” *Politika*, July 11, 1964, 9.

<sup>99</sup> *Politika*, April 27, 1966, 24.

<sup>100</sup> “Pepsi-kola od juce u prodaji,” *Politika*, April 27, 1966, 10.

moment available in Yugoslavia, and popular actors and singers participated in it, selecting the best of what was offered to them. Although there was a variety of carbonated beverages at the tasting, Pepsi-Cola carried the day decisively. Appraising this American beverage, one singer exclaimed: "This is the best soft drink I have ever drunk." An actress added: "It's a shame we don't have more beverages like this."<sup>101</sup>

With the sentence "It's a shame we don't have more beverages like this," it is almost as if a hint were being given that Coca-Cola would soon reach Yugoslavia, although there had been reports of this earlier. An article about Coca-Cola in *Ilustrovana politika* from September 1965, seemed to be a way of "getting a feel for the lay of the land" for the move of this "capitalist drink" into "socialist Yugoslavia." In it, Coca-Cola is described as a "symbol of the civilization of the 'new world' and the American way of life." By then the term "Coca-Colonization" was already in use, with the appraisal of *Ilustrovana politika* that the French meant by this term a description of the "invasion of American capital." All of this pointed to how the Coca-Colonized world, which included 120 countries stretching from "the South Pole to the North Pole," was approaching Yugoslavia, something that was repeated indirectly at the end of the article: "The rulers from Atlanta . . . are continuing their expansion into heretofore unconquered countries."<sup>102</sup>

The promotion of Coca-Cola continued into 1967 with information in the press that every day, "around the globe, 90 million people drink a bottle of Coke," with the conclusion that this beverage is "the symbol of 'the American way of life,' which is spreading so across all continents."<sup>103</sup> This presence in the media coincided chronologically with actions aimed at bringing Coke to the Yugoslav market, since the Slovenija-vino enterprise signed an agreement with the Coca-Cola Company in 1967 and officially received a license for the production and sale of its trademarked items.<sup>104</sup> The doors of yet another socialist country had opened for the symbol of the American way of life and the "essence of capitalism."

<sup>101</sup> "Usta sladi, srce hladi," *Ilustrovana politika*, June 20, 1967, 4–5.

<sup>102</sup> I.M., "Svetsko carstvo Koka-kole," *Ilustrovana politika*, September 7, 1965, 28–29.

<sup>103</sup> "Šta se krije u flaši," *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 463, September 19, 1947, 26.

<sup>104</sup> "Istorijat," <http://www.coca-colahellenic.rs/Aboutus/History>.

The production of Coca-Cola in Zemun commenced in 1968, in “the most modern facility for non-alcoholic drinks in the country,” which made it possible for residents up and down the country to enjoy “the exceptional refreshment of a cold Coca-Cola, the favorite drink of all the continents.” The construction of this facility was the fruit of cooperation between Slovenija-vino and Generalturist with the Coca-Cola Export Company. In this way Yugoslavia took its place on the list of countries “from Alaska to the Sahara, from Tokyo to Buenos Aires, from Sofia to Sidney” that are able to enjoy this “exceptional drink that is no different anywhere, with a taste that one can never grow tired of.”<sup>105</sup> Although Yugoslavia, thanks to Coke, made the list of countries “from Alaska to the Sahara,” the beverage was not, at least at first, to be found “from the Vardar to Triglav.”<sup>106</sup> In a letter of a reader from Presečina kod Leskovca, the writer complains that “it seems to me that only children in big cities like Belgrade are drinking Coca-Cola, and that those of us in smaller cities are supposed to be content with the pretty ads. In Ohrid, and Struga, and in Leskovac, too, you cannot see hide nor hair of Coke.”<sup>107</sup>

After Coca-Cola entered the Yugoslav market, a series of advertisements kicked off; the first was “Well now, Coca-Cola has arrived!” An intensive marketing campaign was run in *Ilustrovana politika* in July 1969, when people of all generations (although mostly young) appeared in the ads, along with bottles of Coke, in various situations: at a picnic, playing the guitar, at the beach, at a disco.<sup>108</sup> In its ad campaigns, the Coca-Cola Company tended to project an image of youth, freedom, and prosperity, because young people were an important target group not just in campaigns by profitable companies but also in the campaign by the American government for the Americanization of the world.

Along with American soft drinks, cigarettes from the United States also made their way to Yugoslavia. The tobacco factory in Niš started making Kent cigarettes in 1968, “the cigarette that people smoke more

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<sup>105</sup> *Politika*, October 9, 1968, 26.

<sup>106</sup> The expression “from Vardar (in Macedonia) to Triglav (in Slovenia)” was used to reflect the whole of Yugoslavia.

<sup>107</sup> “Pošaljite Koka-kolu,” *Ilustrovana politika*, August 5, 1969, 5.

<sup>108</sup> *Ilustrovana politika*, July 15, 1969, 53.

than any other in the world.” The director of the factory stated: “We had to make peace with the fact that the consumption of cigarettes of the American type predominates in the world, while Oriental cigarettes, which are among the things we manufacture, are being smoked less and less.” He added that before making licensed cigarettes from abroad, the famous domestic brands Drina and Dijamant were made according to American standards, and this is what led to the decision to purchase the Kent license and receive a group of American experts in Niš. This was, then, a matter of Americanization on several levels, because not only were people smoking American cigarettes in Yugoslavia, but the method of production had also been Americanized. In fact, new factory machines, new technology, and a new manner of working came along with Kents and the experts.<sup>109</sup>

The presence of Coca-Cola in Yugoslavia, the country of socialism with a communist ideology, represented, from the viewpoint of America and Yugoslavia, yet another victory for both sides. The Americans saw their symbol, a symbol of capitalism, inserted into socialism, and so entire generations of Yugoslavs were made a part of an Americanized world, and Yugoslavia with this move added one more item to the list of moves showing how liberal a country it was, and in which direction it inclined in popular culture. Here, as in everything of this sort, the biggest advantage accrued to the citizens of Yugoslavia. An Internet discussion board from 2012 is evidence of this: a man from Sarajevo, in an attempt to show how Yugoslav communism was different from, and better than, other kinds, made the argument that “in Yugoslavia there wasn’t communism, but rather Coca-Cola socialism. You had Coke, Levis, Adidas, as well as a decent job, apartment, health care, and a pension.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> S. Lazarević, “Operacija Kent,” *Ilustrovana politika*, September 24, 1968, 44.

<sup>110</sup> Aleksandar Saša Brezar, “Preimenujmo ulicu Maršala Tita u ulicu Alije Izetbegovića,” *Između planina u srcu doline ima jedan grad, Rajvosa mu je ime*, 2010, <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=162505429665&to pic=12352>.

## FASHION IN THE WESTERN/AMERICAN STYLE

In a description of the Dalmatian waterfront and the people to be found on it in 1955, Miljenko Smoje made the following observation:

Everyone dressed in the American style, and you could see shirts that seemed like pyjamas with palm trees and monkeys across the chest, with various inscriptions and logos, and here and there a few big cowboy hats. Women wore nylon stockings that rustled. You'd think that you were anywhere in California, or at least in San Pedro. A bridge had been built over the ocean, over which mail could travel: from our little city, letters—and from America, packages.<sup>111</sup>

In just a few sentences, Smoje conjures up a visualization of Americanization with this description, as well as one of its mechanisms—by mentioning “packages from America.”

By the 1950s, American influence on Yugoslav fashion was noticeable, because of packages arriving from America as well as fashion magazines and the imitation of trends from movies. In the 1960s, though, packages from America were no longer necessary for people wanting to dress on the Western model. The chief fashion trends of that day were above all European ones, which came from Paris, London, and Rome. Dior and Coco Chanel were ascendant as the creators of high fashion in the 1950s, and in the next decade they were joined by Pierre Cardin and Yves Saint Laurent.<sup>112</sup> At this time British influence was also strong, via the mini-skirt, which was launched in 1965 by Mary Quant.<sup>113</sup> Generally speaking, on account of Western fashion's high profile, Yugoslavia was more Westernized than Americanized as far as fashion is concerned. By accepting styles from the West, it wasn't just blue jeans or mini-skirts that were accepted, though—it was a new and freer way of looking at life.

<sup>111</sup> M. Smoje, *Kronika o našem malom mistu* (Split, 1971), 121.

<sup>112</sup> J. Petrović, “Zapadni uticaji na jugoslovensku modu šezdesetih godina dvadesetog veka,” M.A. thesis, Belgrade, 2004, 4.

<sup>113</sup> For more information on fashion in the 1960s, see Y. Cannikie, *Fashion of a Decade: The 1960s* (New York, 2007), and S. and T. Pendergast, *Fashion, Costume and Culture*, vol. 5 (Detroit, 2004).



In getting samples of Western trends, the institution of shopping played a large role; shopping tourism was one of the most effective ways of directing people toward “the seasonal caprices of Western fashion production.”<sup>114</sup> From the late 1950s, and especially in the 1960s, with the liberalization of the visa regime, people traveled to Graz, Klagenfurt, Thessaloniki, and, above all, Trieste. Shopping in Trieste enjoyed a major uptick at the end of the 1950s, and, at its peak in the 1960s and 1970s, contributed to Yugoslavia’s cultural and social transformation. It also changed the standard of living.<sup>115</sup>

The most important article brought back from Trieste was jeans, which were bought and sold intensively beginning in the 1950s. In the next decade, along with jeans, renowned coats called *šuškavci* (a windbreaker, or a kind of plastic raincoat that rustled when the owner moved) came in from Trieste. People who could not travel to Trieste bought goods like these in consignment shops called “Komisioni.”

Besides shopping-tourism and consignment shops, fashion magazines (*Praktična žena*, *Svijet*, *Bazar*) also exercised great influence over the acceptance of Western ideals. They reprinted supplements from the international press, so that over time more and more local authors of texts and illustrations written according to the “model” of Western magazines were published.<sup>116</sup> Fashion along Western lines was also accessible in foreign journals, such as *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Grazia*, *Marie Claire*, *Donna*, and *Burda*, which could be purchased in the 1960s at magazine stands all over the country.

Jeans, which were one of the symbols of America, definitely played a special role in the Americanization of Yugoslav fashion. The theoretician of culture, John Fisk, lists jeans as part of popular culture, and his book on popular culture actually begins with a section of reflections on jeans. A survey that he conducted among students showed that wearing jeans was a symbol of freedom that contrasted with the limitations

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<sup>114</sup> Velimirović, *Aleksandar Joksimović. Moda i identitet*, 18.

<sup>115</sup> For more detailed information on shopping in Trieste during the time of socialist Yugoslavia, see B. Luthar, “Shame, Desire and Longing for the West. a Case Study of Consumption,” in *Remembering Utopia. The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. B. Luthar and M. Pušnik (Washington, D.C., 2010), 341–377.

<sup>116</sup> Velimirović, *Aleksandar Joksimović, Moda i identitet*, 18.

imposed by social categories of behavior and identity. Therefore the attitude toward jeans in communism and in socialist Yugoslavia was of special significance, because styles of dress, according to Fisk, primarily aid in the transmission of social meaning, and less in the expression of personal emotion or mood.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, according to Christiane Saint-Jean Paulin, jeans also denoted democratic values, since by erasing distinctions between social positions they negated the meaning of hierarchy and authority, and they gave expression to the concept of freedom, which is the essence of rebellion.<sup>118</sup>

By the 1950s, jeans were already the most sought-after fashion item in Yugoslavia, and they were also a unique status symbol. What people wanted above all were the American brands Lee and Levi's, and these were usually purchased in Trieste or in consignment stores called "Komisioni."<sup>119</sup> By the 1960s, the jeans that had been hotly desired in the 1950s were slowly becoming everyday things. As the journalist Željko Ivanjek recalled in his descriptions of the 1960s, "Every girl you'd go out with wore Levi's, Wranglers, or Lees. And it was still a long time until they were produced under license."<sup>120</sup>

Along with jeans, in the 1960s other fashion trends could also be seen on the streets of Yugoslav cities, such as mini-skirts, op art fashion, hippy fashion, and space-look fashion, which mad Americanization and Westernization a part of everyday life.

These were the years when, at the global level, music also had a strong impact on clothing, and styles and trends were being born that were animated by the twist, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Bob Dylan. All of this made its way to Yugoslavia as well. "Twist fashion" (with skirts and jackets) turned up along with twist music in 1962; people copied Bob Dylan by wearing leather jackets; and in the wake of the Beatles' album *Sgt. Pepper* (1967), jackets with epau-

<sup>117</sup> Fisk, *Popularna kultura*, 8–10.

<sup>118</sup> K. Sen-Žan-Polen, *Kontrakultura. Sjedinjene Američke Države, šezdesete godine: rađanje novih utopija* (Belgrade, 1999), 45.

<sup>119</sup> Lucić-Todosić, *Od trokinga do twista*, 116.

<sup>120</sup> Ž. Ivanjek, "Kako smo ljetovali 60-ih I 70-ih godina prošlog stoljeća," *jutarnji list*, November 8, 2006 <http://www.jutrnji.hr.template/article-print/jsp?id=23108>.

lettes appeared in men's fashion; these were produced by the domestic factory, Beko, starting in 1969.<sup>121</sup>

The films *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* also left their mark on fashion in Yugoslavia, too, as we have noted above. Jacqueline Kennedy, a fashion icon of the twentieth century, swayed fashion all around the world. Even when she was the First Lady of America, the popular Jackie was the center of public attention, and she became one of the symbols of womanhood. She cultivated a minimalist style—tight, geometric forms, shorn of excess ornamentation, huge glasses, round hats without a rim, as well as her characteristic hairdo (the so-called Jackie look).<sup>122</sup> Although in the Yugoslav press there was no direct invocation of Jacqueline Kennedy as an ideal, her fashion style could be recognized on the pages of many women's magazines and in the memories of women who imitated her.

Op art fashion, which debuted globally in 1966, immediately found a place in Yugoslavia. Dara Čalenić, of Belgrade, declared that op art is a style that “refreshes and flatters every woman”; an anchor-woman on TV Beograd wore an op art dress, and in one department store 3,000 meters of material with op art designs was sold in one week.<sup>123</sup> The shoe company Astra made women's shows in the op art style, while Printeks, from Prizren, produced dresses with op art colors; op art fashion shows were also organized.<sup>124</sup> Even “space-fashion,” which went through a boom around the world after the first major achievements in outer space, came to Yugoslavia, and during the visit of the crew of Apollo 11 to Belgrade in 1969, a “cosmic fashion show” was held in Belgrade, where mini-dresses made of silver ribbons, woven together like netting, were shown.<sup>125</sup>

In the Americanization of Yugoslav fashion, hippie culture was very prominent, along with everything that went along with it—long hair, headbands, jeans, T-shirts, long skirts and tunics in picturesque colors, leather sandals, and a great deal of jewelry, all worn by women

<sup>121</sup> Petrović, *Zapadni uticaji na jugoslovensku modu šezdesetih godina*, 21–24.

<sup>122</sup> Velimirović, *Aleksandar Joksimović*, 96.

<sup>123</sup> “Volite li op art,” *Bazar*, July 15, 1966, 41.

<sup>124</sup> Petrović, *Zapadni uticaji na jugoslovensku modu šezdesetih godina*, 21–22.

<sup>125</sup> V.C., “Sa kosmonautima i kosmonautička moda,” *Politika*, October 21, 1969, 12.

and men alike.<sup>126</sup> The fashion critic of the magazine *Bazar* was supportive of hippie fashion. He wrote that “flowers are blooming on men’s shirts, and girls wear ties. You can’t tell for sure whether you have a son or a daughter,” concluding that “no other choice remains but to accept as accomplished fact this fashion and to keep pace with it.”<sup>127</sup> Flower designs on shirts, pants, jackets, coats, and hats thus became a sign of distinction among Yugoslav “flower children” as well. Female relatives, neighbors, and local seamstresses competed with each other to come up with interesting wardrobe variations in accordance with the latest flowery fashion. In the opinion of contemporaries, young people up and down Yugoslavia were, in comparison with young people from the West, more imaginative and intriguingly outfitted, because each person had his or her one-of-a-kind creation.<sup>128</sup>

Apart from the adoption of the aforementioned Western fashion trends, there were also situations that suggest a direct acceptance of American fashion influences. That is why *Bazar*, on back-to-school day for the year 1965/66, ran a supplement for mothers on children’s clothes, under the title “American Fashion for Young Girls.” The text referred to the fact that the items were selected from catalogues of American clothing manufactures, with “an eye toward helping mothers, although only with ideas. We did take into account the availability of fabrics in our stores.”<sup>129</sup> Informing readers that the fabrics for American patterns could be found in “our shops” demonstrates that Americanization in Yugoslavia was proceeded along with consideration of domestic realities.

The presence of a large number of international fashion magazines, as well as the suggested adoption of Western trends (“American Fashion for Young Girls”), points to the fact that the government had nothing against Western fashion, and there were times when it even supported them openly. An analysis about issues facing young people, by the Ideological Commission of the City Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, speaks to this. It cites the example of a mother who argued publicly with her son in the center of Belgrade

<sup>126</sup> Sen-Žan-Polen, *Kontrakultura*, 44–46.

<sup>127</sup> Č. Čedomir, “B.B. Bitnik za mlade,” *Bazar*, January 20, 1968, 4.

<sup>128</sup> Janković Džet, *Godine na 6*, 215.

<sup>129</sup> “Američki modeli za devojčice,” *Bazar*, September 1, 1965, 15.

and reported him to the police “because he wouldn’t wear any respectable clothes—he just wants jeans.”<sup>130</sup> From the Ideological Commission, one of the pillars of ideological direction and judgement, one might expect it to take the side of the mother and lay into the son who wanted jeans, as would probably be the case in other communist countries. That, however, is not what happened. A defense of jeans, on the contrary, came next:

At bottom, jeans are democratic and inexpensive clothing. Young people who wear them at school, however, are considered by the middle-class citizenry to be delinquents, however, because wearing them violates traditional, national codes. And here unfolds a folkloric idea that jeans are capitalism, and European middle-class clothing is socialism . . . The degree to which this intolerance toward the new, urbanized youth and their democratic mass culture is conservative can be seen in the fact that SOME PARENTS ARE TURNING IN THEIR OWN CHILDREN TO THE POLICE . . . Unfortunately the low level of democratic culture of many citizens makes it possible to find people in our country who would like to join the Chinese “cultural revolution.”<sup>131</sup>

This overt support for jeans is another example of how the government supported young people and their turn to the West. Judging from this analysis, the young people who wanted to wear jeans and who had long hair were not guilty; rather, the guilty ones were their parents, or the “conservatives,” who did not understand. Thus, along with the previously mentioned situation connected with the acceptance of rock and roll, which made it possible for them to “explode,” or burst in through the front door, of cultural and recreational centers across Yugoslavia, fashion found itself poised to be an ideal space for the “toleration” of young people’s pro-Western trends.

The conditions for fashion in the East Bloc speak to the openness of Yugoslavia to Western fashion trends, as well as to fashion in the context of the Cold War. The stance toward fashion in the coun-

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<sup>130</sup> IAB, GK SKS Beograd, F-209, *Mladi u savremenim drustvenim zbivanjima*—Neka pitanja i problemi omladine Beograda, October 1966.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

tries behind the Iron Curtain was characterized, in fact, by an energetic rejection of Western fashions as bourgeois and decadent, and was accompanied by a plea for the “creation of classless socialist clothing adapted for the working woman.”<sup>132</sup> The emphasis was on simple working clothes for the “strong woman,” because in the socialist camp the powerful woman was the ideal, in contrast to young and pretty women, who were the ideal in capitalism.<sup>133</sup>

As an illustration of the position of the communist authorities on Western fashion, the case of jeans is usually cited; they were denounced by the authorities and much in demand among young people. Writing about the black market in communist countries, Katherine Verdery notes: “You could, for instance, spent your entire month’s pay on a pair of jeans, but it was worth it, because wearing them showed that you could acquire something that the system told you was not necessary and that you should not have. That is how consumer goods and objects gave you an identity that distanced you from socialism and made it possible for you to single yourself out as an individual despite the pitiless pressures to weld everyone’s abilities and tastes into one collectivity.”<sup>134</sup>

Precisely because they were banned, jeans became a symbol of youth culture and a means of opposing the regime in the Soviet Union. In the Brezhnev era, they were even the object of attacks, with the Ministry of Light Industry announcing in 1975 that in the future blue jeans and denim shirts were going to be produced in the Soviet Union. In addition to “Soviet jeans,” ones made in Poland and East Germany were also acceptable in the USSR, but they never managed to win the “hearts and souls” of young people. Instead, the most sought-after kinds were Levi’s and Wranglers.<sup>135</sup> Thus we see that, while in the East jeans symbolized resistance to the authorities, the Yugoslav government considered them to be “democratic and inexpensive clothing.”<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Velimirović, *Aleksandar Joksimović. Moda i identitet*, 37.

<sup>133</sup> Stitzel, “On the Seam Between Socialism and Capitalism: East German Fashion Shows,” in *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*, ed. D.F. Crew (Oxford and New York, 2003), 63.

<sup>134</sup> Verdery, *Šta je bio socijalizam i šta dolazi posle njega*, 59.

<sup>135</sup> Seifert, “From Cold War to Wary Peace,” in *The Americanization of Europe*, 200.

<sup>136</sup> IAB, GK SKS Beograd, F-209, Mladi u savremenim društvenim zbivanjima—Neka pitanja i problemi omladine Beograda, October 1966.

Articles in the Yugoslav press are illustrative of the Yugoslav attitude toward East European fashion, or, more precisely, of how the Yugoslavs distanced themselves from it. In this regard a report from the Congress of Eastern Fashion is especially informative; this Congress was held in 1961 in East Berlin, and seven countries participated in it.<sup>137</sup> At the outset of the article reporting on it, the writer noted that “the way one dresses is a matter of taste, climate, and money, but also political orientation.” The article emphasizes the existence of a “fashion curtain,” and through some concrete descriptions it points out the essential differences of East European fashion compared with Yugoslav. The author does not miss the opportunity to assert that the “central task of East European fashion is to hit on the most fitting way of clothing corpulent women,” and cites the decision of the Congress to “determine the directions of mass-produced clothing” in East European countries, as well as to ramp up large-scale production of the displayed items, “so that the ‘socialist camp’ will create its own, unified way of dressing.”<sup>138</sup> Although the author’s comments that the Congress renounced “the extravagant, formalistic, and decadent Western patterns” are included, as well as a statement by the director of the East German Fashion Institute that “We don’t want any precious dresses of the capitalist type,” the distance from “Bloc-wide trends” is even more apparent. The case of Lotte Ulbricht, the wife of the first secretary of the Central Committee of the East German party, Walter Ulbricht, underscores the differences compared to Yugoslavia. She was up in arms over “jeans, black sweaters, and Western hairstyles for girls.” The article concluded with the statement that the Eastern Congress of Fashion hurled an “anathema at the Western style of dress.”<sup>139</sup>

In the article “Fashion Is in Fashion,” in which it was reported that in the USSR “a campaign has been initiated against ugly and poorly made clothing,” the many shortcomings of Soviet fashion were listed: “the insufficient taste of the industrial producers,” “crudeness in manufacture,” “‘Daltonism’ with regard to the beauty of colors,

<sup>137</sup> The Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Poland.

<sup>138</sup> B. Dikić, “Kongres istočne mode,” *Ilustrovana politika*, no. 131, May 9, 1961, 18.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

lack of sense of lines, fairgrounds-like gaudiness, [and] a eunuch-like grayness.”<sup>140</sup> All of these articles had the obvious goal of demonstrating how little the Yugoslav case differed from the Western one, and that the only substantive differences existed in relation to fashions from behind the Iron Curtain. Thus we see Yugoslavia exploiting another aspect of Western influences to imply its specific position.

### HIPPIES WHO TOE THE “PARTY LINE”

The stormy 1960s, marked by great crises, engendered the counter-culture—a reaction to the atmosphere of tension and restiveness but it was also the expression of political ideas, ways of life, and philosophical propositions. Above all these belonged to young people, students, and intellectuals, who all shared a characteristic rebellion against the contemporary dominant culture and the general system of values.<sup>141</sup>

The New Left comprised the first current within this new movement; it emphasized the flaws in American democracy and expressed rebellious ideas, primarily via the struggle against the war in Vietnam and against the political system and capitalism, while the second current consisted of hippies, whose critique was directed more at the staid way of life of the middle class and at industrial society, and far less at political issues.<sup>142</sup> As part of the counterculture, the hippie culture emerged; it was a form of the culture of young people, which over the course of the 1960s spread beyond the United States, promoting, in contrast to the values of middle-class society, the desire for personal happiness and individual creativity. The “foundations” of hippie culture were laid in the 1950s by the beatniks in the United States, who advocated free sexuality, drug use for the expansion of one’s consciousness, a turn to teachings from the Far East, all accompanied by influential popular music.<sup>143</sup> The American beatniks quickly became a theme in the Yugoslav press, and *Politika*, in an article entitled “Who Are the Beatniks?” gave a detailed overview of them: their appearance, the music they listened to, the books that inspired them,

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<sup>140</sup> P. Vuković, “U modi je moda,” *Ilustrovana politika*, December 19, 1961, 18.

<sup>141</sup> Sen-Žan-Polen, *Kontrakultura*, 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–6.

<sup>143</sup> “Hipi kultura,” in *Leksikon savremene kulture*, 226.



as well as a survey of the most important writers of the Beat generation, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.<sup>144</sup> Literary journals also wrote about the Beatniks, and more often than not there were also translations of Ginsberg's poems and excerpts from Kerouac's prose.<sup>145</sup>

The counterculture of the 1960s turned into a global phenomenon, thus the New Left also found its space within Yugoslavia. The main works of the "guru of the New Left," Herbert Marcuse, inspired by Marxism and psychoanalysis in his harsh critiques of consumer society, became easily accessible to Yugoslav readers as well in the 1960s. The translation of the book *Eros and Civilization* was released in 1965 by the publishing house "Naprijed" from Zagreb, while the Sarajevo firm "Veselin Masleša" brought out translations of his works *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1968) and *One-Dimensional Man* (1968).<sup>146</sup> Marcuse was the favorite of the critically inclined, left-oriented intellectuals, and his works were "required reading" among the leaders of the Yugoslav student uprisings of 1968.<sup>147</sup> The New Left also left its mark on the pages of student publications, and the newspapers *Tribuna* and *Student* published works by Marcuse at the beginning of 1968.<sup>148</sup> This philosopher was on the editorial board of *Praxis*, and he was also the guest speaker at the Korčula summer school.<sup>149</sup>

Marcuse's popularity among critically disposed Yugoslav leftists was rivaled only by his unpopularity with the Yugoslav authorities, probably because of his thesis that the working class had been manipulated and integrated into the system.<sup>150</sup> The government prosecuted his opponents, such as Mihailo Marković, referring to Marcuse and

<sup>144</sup> V. Čolanović, "Ko su 'bitnici'", *Politika*, August 14, 1960, 19.

<sup>145</sup> See, for example, "O Kerouacu i bitnicima," *Književna tribina*, April 1, 1960, 23; Ginsberg, "Pesme," *Književne novine*, April 8, 1960; A. Ginsberg, "Urlik," *Književne novine*, August 26, 1960, 17; A. Ginsberg, "Pesme," *Delo*, 1962, vol. 8, no. 2, 207–216.

<sup>146</sup> *Katalog knjiga na jezicima jugoslovenskih naroda 1868–1972*, vol. 2, 126–217.

<sup>147</sup> Arsić and Marković, '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, 153.

<sup>148</sup> Kanclajter and Stojaković, "1968 u Jugoslaviji—studentski protesti između Istoka i Zapada," 469.

<sup>149</sup> "Praxis i Korčulanska letnja škola," *Republika*, no. 190, June 1–15, 1998, [http://www.yuope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/98/190/190\\_18.HTM](http://www.yuope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/98/190/190_18.HTM).

<sup>150</sup> Arsić and Marković, '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, 33.

claiming that they adopted his ideas and that he held “enormous sway over one portion of our so-called humanistic intelligentsia.”<sup>151</sup> Still, if one bears in mind that Marcuse’s works were published in Yugoslavia, it is clear that the criticism directed at him must, like with many other critiques of the West, be contextualized and relativized. This is yet another example of the contradictory elements in the Yugoslav state of affairs relating to the West and Western values.

In the controversies about the Yugoslav system during the 1960s, it was the people “from among our so-called humanistic intelligentsia”—over whom Marcuse had “enormous sway”—who subjected Yugoslav reality to unsparing criticism. These were the critical philosophers and sociologists gathered around the journal *Praxis*,<sup>152</sup> and the “guru of the New Left” had a direct impact on developments on the Yugoslav domestic political scene.<sup>153</sup> In the judgment of the Party, some authors of *Praxis* displayed “positions in opposition to the program of the LCY [League of Communists of Yugoslavia].”<sup>154</sup>

Since the New Left, therefore, was patently “out of favor” because of its influence on the *Praxis* philosophers and the leaders of the student rebellion, the government opted for “the other current within American counterculture,” hippies. They were aided in this by the dissidence of the “flower children,” who were against the war in Vietnam, because their pacifism meshed with Yugoslavia’s foreign policy. In addition, hippies were a phenomenon of the 1960s that spread like wildfire around the world, and so Yugoslavia could show, by its acceptance of hippies, that was receptive to cutting-edge global trends—especially when one reduced them more to form than content.

To judge from articles in the press, interest in hippies started in 1967, and the amount of writing about them increased in 1968.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>152</sup> Among them were Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, Milan Kangrga, Danko Grlić, Predrag Vranicki, Mihajlo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, Miladin Životić, Svetozar Stojanović, and Zagorka Golubović.

<sup>153</sup> For details, see N. Popov, ed., *Sloboda i nasilje. Razgovor o časopisu Praxis i Korčulanskoj letnjoj školi* (Belgrade, 2003).

<sup>154</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, O nekim shvatanjima i stavovima u časopisu, *Praxis*, July 8, 1966.

Writing about 1967, Željko Ivanek stressed that Croatian newspapers carried pictures of hippies in those days,

but everything was meant to serve the Party line. They were actually, “with flowers in their hair,” fighting against the war being waged by their government in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. There was no mention of sex, drugs, and rock and roll, unless it was to disparage them. They only mentioned the protests, the mass gatherings, and so on. Young Americans were standing up to their elders in the struggle for justice for everyone. It was all in the spirit of the old saying, “American and England will be/proletarian country.”<sup>155</sup>

The benign Yugoslav view of hippies was, of course, not articulated politically in any explicit manner, as was the case in most other instances of acceptance of American or Western values or phenomena. In these circumstances, then, the government chose to support the creation of a certain atmosphere through the molding of public opinion with the help of the controlled media. The nature of articles in Yugoslav newspapers about hippies confirms this beyond a doubt. In an article published in *Bazar*, reprinted from the American press, they are referred to as “flower children,” a phenomenon originating in the United States, which then spread to Paris, London, and New Delhi (which showed that they were accepted not just by Western countries but by nonaligned ones too). What follows is a series of descriptions: hippies renounce outdated ways of life, they scorn money and property, they believe in the birth of a new society that will be rich in spiritual virtues, and they engage in fervent anti-war protests—all of which underscores similarities of views with Yugoslav official policies. The text contains no criticism of drugs; it is only mentioned that they use them, with the inference that hippies were a threat to the conservative American society, which was unsettled by their slogan “Make love, not war.”<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Z. Ivanjek, “1967: Ljeto Beatlesa, ljubavi i hipija s cvijetom u kosi,” *Žutarnji list*, June 28, 2010, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/article/article-print/jsp?id=842668>.

<sup>156</sup> “Ko su, u stvari, hipici,” *Bazar*, no. 125, February 3, 1968, 6–7.

The favorable attitude toward hippies was obvious from the frequency of articles, the way they were furnished with pictures, and their placement within the newspapers where they were published. The student press also devoted some attention to hippies, especially in the context of the protests of 1968, but they did not speak in unison. While *Student*, for example carried sociological fragments about the hippie movement, along with excerpts from the book *Hippies* by Catrina van Mopesco, in which the American government is accused of discrimination against hippies, the weekly *Mladina* from Ljubljana criticized hippies, whose protests revealed them to be “apolitical, superficial slaves to fashion who are inclined to hedonism.”<sup>157</sup>

Perhaps the best evidence that hippies “toed the line” of what the Party was promoting is provided by an issue of *Politika*, in which articles connected with a “meeting of solidarity with the Vietnamese people,” as well as one entitled “Among the Hippies of Belgrade.” In this text, they are described as well-educated young people who have discussions about the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., read Alberto Moravia, and go to festivals of art films; these descriptions present them as well informed people who are in the know about the latest creative works in international and domestic art. Accompanied by emphatic support for the general attitudes of the Belgrade hippies, this influential daily newspaper enabled them then—and this was surely no accident—to air their critiques about the Yugoslav system. This makes the entire Yugoslav relationship with hippies seem full of contradictions, and that is very much par for the course. In response to the question “What is communism?,” Belgrade hippies responded, “Something beautiful and very far away,” and in response to the question “What do you think of the Youth League?,” they gave an answer with critical undertones: “Nowadays that’s nothing but a name! In terms of how they think, they have nothing to do with young people. For the most part it’s just the organization for young officials and executives of the future.”<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Zubak, “Pripremanje terena: odjek globalnog studentskog bunta 1968. godine u jugoslavenskom omladinskom i studentskom tisku,” 444.

<sup>158</sup> M. Maticki, “Među beogradskim hipicima,” *Politika*, April 7, 1968, 9.

Open criticism of the system, published in the government-controlled press, is at the very least an odd move. It is possible that foreign policy concerns centering on criticism of the war outweighed domestic political need to avoid criticism of the system and organizations such as the Youth League. However, texts like these show that criticism of the regime was to a certain degree possible insofar as it suited the regime. Again it seems as if a two-fold reaping of benefits is at work. The government demonstrated in such examples that form (hippies, Hollywood, rock and roll, comics) was for the most part inconsequential to it; what was important was minding the essence, which could be used to examine critically Yugoslav realities (the New Left, *Praxis*, the Korčula Summer School, the Black Wave, performances such as *Hats Off* and *When Pumpkins Blossomed*), and the government showed that it was perfectly capable of evaluating when something should be a priority.

The ability of the Yugoslav regime to turn to its own advantage the penetration of global trends was first revealed in the “opening of doors” to Hollywood film production and jazz and rock and roll. It also accompanied the breakthrough of hippie culture. Utilizing hippies for propaganda purposes (generally in criticism of American policy because of the war in Vietnam), the Yugoslav regime depicted them as young, sensible people on the stages of theaters, in anti-war musicals (*Hair*, *Viet-Rock*) as well as in contemporary reworkings of the classics, as in Shakespeare’s play *Two Men from Verona*, in which young actors performed in hippie outfits.<sup>159</sup>

A comprehensive view of the daily lives of young people in Yugoslavia points to the two sides of both Yugoslav youth and Yugoslav society. Young people could simultaneously be in the League of Socialist Youth, participating in labor projects and mass meetings in honor of Tito’s birthday, while also drinking Coca-Cola, wearing jeans, listening to rock and roll, reading comics and X-novels, and even joining hippie communes. Thus was achieved in Yugoslavia another strange hybrid: Americanized young people, who were also socialist youth.

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<sup>159</sup> B.O., “Veronski vitezi u—hipi odelima,” *Politika*, April 1, 1969, 10.

## Consumer Society on the American Model

Wherever you see a suitable spot,  
plant a self-service grocery;  
it's a noble thing and  
rewards you, too.<sup>160</sup>

The processes of Americanization of socialist Yugoslavia reveal the dynamics of the country's evolution. The path from Partisan songs to jazz and rock and roll, like the path from fascination with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration packages containing milk and powdered eggs and that mythical yellow cheese for a half-starved population to the development of a consumer society with all the key markers of Western consumer societies, was traveled in a relative short period of time, less than two decades. With a consumer society, as one of the visible pro-Western features by the mid-1960s, socialist Yugoslavia was proceeding down the path of modernization, here by dint of processes of Americanization, in the broadest sense of the word.

The rise of consumer society in Europe is often equated with the Americanization of the European economy, although the roots of consumer society go back into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and are inseparable from the history of European capitalism and culture.<sup>161</sup> Even though it originated as an imitation of European consumerism, the American consumerism of the twentieth century took over the dominant position, and America became its world leader.<sup>162</sup> European consumer society started to flourish after World War II, when the American concept of "directing people's free time to enjoyment, rest, and consumption" completely "subjugated" the West European

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<sup>160</sup> M. Josimović, "Trgovina bez tezge," *Ilustrovana politika*, May 16, 1961, 4.

<sup>161</sup> Stearns, *Consumerism in World History*, 17; G. Cross, "Consumerism," *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, vol. 5 (New York, 2001), 77.

<sup>162</sup> Stearns, *Consumerism in World History*, 40, 46.

terrain.<sup>163</sup> The Americanization of consumer society arrived in Europe with the Marshall Plan, and thus a new consumer identity was formed that was closely bound up with American goods. The French *auteur* Jean-Luc Godard described people having this new identity as “the children of Marx and Coca-Cola.”<sup>164</sup>

Although Western Europe emerged as almost equal to America in its “consumer fever,” the United States still provided (or, actually, dictated) the rhythm for consumer society. Thus the “global transformation of desire” created a situation in which the wishes of the individual in the second half of the twentieth century were dictated by the American concept of consumer society and the American system of values.

The “golden age” of consumer society,<sup>165</sup> with its apex in the 1950s and 1960s, was the time of the formation of mass consumer society in Europe, wealthier in the West, less wealthy in the East, in which Yugoslavia, as in many other things, found itself somewhere in the middle. One thing that both the poorer and the richer, however, did have in common was an obsession with America as the measure of all things connected to this issue. Although modern theoreticians, under the influence of Theodor Adorno and the other representatives of the Frankfurt School, conceived of consumerism as the product of mass production and capitalism in the twentieth century,<sup>166</sup> this product of capitalism became, in Yugoslavia, also part of everyday socialist life. It was simultaneously part of Americanization and part of general social change and one of the global phenomena of the twentieth century.

Consumer society, or the American model of such a society, was considered an important weapon in the Cold War arsenal. In 1951 the sociologist David Riesman wrote an evocative, satirical essay about the meaning of articles of mass consumption as the means for destroying communism. It was called “The Nylon War,” and it described an

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<sup>163</sup> Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 21; Maze, *Bezgranična zabava*, 162; Stearns, *Consumerism in World History*, 48.

<sup>164</sup> De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 338–339, 342.

<sup>165</sup> In the scholarly literature, the golden age for European consumer society is considered the period from 1945 to 1973. For more information, see Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 37–43.

<sup>166</sup> Cross, “Consumerism,” 77.

imaginary bombardment of the USSR.<sup>167</sup> In this bombardment, there were neither ordinary nor atomic bombs; instead, the Soviet Union was being bombarded with American merchandise (nylon stockings, cigarettes, yo-yos, watches, etc.), after which the Soviets retaliated by bombarding America with smaller quantities of jars of caviar, furs, and thousands of copies of Stalin's speeches.<sup>168</sup> Even then, Riesman had foreseen the direction that would be taken in the use of consumer society in the fight for "hearts and souls" of the adherents of various ideologies, although at that point it was still uncertain whether nylon stockings would emerge victorious over Stalin's speeches.

Although socialist countries opposed Americanization, in practice, from the late 1950s onward, they attempted to cheer up their citizens "with all of the accessories with which *rotten* capitalism was intoxicated."<sup>169</sup> But this was a far cry from capitalist consumption. According to Katherine Verdery, socialist society guaranteed people food and clothing, but it made no promises as to quality, ready supplies, or selection, which led to long waits in lines for certain items, or to longing for those items that did not exist.<sup>170</sup> This is why one of the most prominent memories of "ordinary people" about their life under socialism is the memory of the absence of desired goods or about constant shortages.<sup>171</sup>

Many theoreticians of consumption, therefore, hold that the collapse of European communism in 1989 was to a considerable degree the outcome of the success of consumerism and the inability of communist governments to accept it completely. Promises that every citizen would have his or her basic needs fulfilled, as regards medical care, education, food, and other daily requirements were not, in fact, accompanied by growth in production or productivity, and, accordingly, the citizens' consumer desires were not satisfied.<sup>172</sup> It was pre-

<sup>167</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 25; de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 350–351.

<sup>168</sup> Riesman, *Abundance for What?*, 67–75.

<sup>169</sup> Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 41.

<sup>170</sup> Verderi, *Šta je bio socijalizam i šta dolazi posle njega*, 54–55.

<sup>171</sup> Luthar, "Shame, Desire and Longing for the West. A Case Study of Consumption," in *Remembering Utopia*, ed. Luthar and Pušnik, 341; Stearns, *Consumerism in World History*, 87.

<sup>172</sup> Cross, "Consumerism," 86.



cisely those long lines that turned into a metaphor for the inefficiency of a planned economy, and while the people “waited in line,” communist leaders attacked Western consumerism as a sign of decadence and inequality in capitalist society.<sup>173</sup>

The years of the “golden age” of consumer society in Europe were also the years of the growth of the standard of living in Yugoslavia. In the period from 1955 to 1961, the Yugoslav economy became more independent of state administration, and a route to a more comfortable life was found in both the turn to light industry and the production of articles of mass consumption.<sup>174</sup> According to statistical data, this was the period of a significant boost in production. From 1953 to 1963, the average annual growth of production was 9.5 percent, and private consumption grew 10 percent, placing Yugoslavia’s economic growth among the most rapid in the world at that time.<sup>175</sup> In the period from 1958 to 1964, the social product went up by 80 percent; industrial production grew at a rate of 12 percent annually; agricultural production increased by 40 percent; the national income per inhabitant rose at a rate of 7.6 percent; and total exports climbed 121 percent and imports 98 percent.<sup>176</sup>

Of course statistics measure percentages, while reality is something else. The Americans, for their part, understood this. According to a report in *Time*, the Yugoslav economy was in “nearly constant chaos,” its foreign debt and unemployment were both on the rise, the average wage amounted to \$53 per month, the cost of food was shooting up at about 30 percent per annum, luxury food items were doubling in price every year, and Tito himself complained that some factories were only working at 40–50 percent capacity. *Time* attributed the cause of this state of affairs to Yugoslavia’s balancing act between “iron communist control” and “flirtation with capitalism.”<sup>177</sup> Still, economic growth and the rise in social product did affect private life

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<sup>173</sup> Moran, *Queuing for Beginners*, 64; Stearns, *Consumerism in World History*, 86–87.

<sup>174</sup> Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 44.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>176</sup> Perović, *Zatvaranje kruga: Ishod politickog rascjepa u SKJ 1971/1972*, 31.

<sup>177</sup> “Yugoslavia: Half Karl and Half Grouch,” *Time*, May 7, 1965, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,898778-2,00.html>.

and the supplies of durable consumer goods—the number of electric stoves rose, for example, along with refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and automobiles.<sup>178</sup> The economic reforms of 1965 brought especially favorable conditions, with the reduction of the role of the state in the economy and the introduction of market socialism, which did not happen in the communist world until 1989.<sup>179</sup> The evolution of Yugoslavia's consumer society became, in this period, an unstoppable process.

The standard of living for Yugoslav citizens at the beginning of the 1960s was, of course, determined by buying power. The ever more prominent conviction that a high quality of life was a requirement in the contemporary era, and was actually a human right as well, played a significant role in this development. Following the spread of this conviction, the objects of prestige and desire became the television, record player, automobile, and homes full of technology and modern furnishings. People took trips at sea, but also abroad, and they built vacation cottages called *vikendice*.<sup>180</sup> At this time people began following consumer trends ever more intensively, and they took their cues from Western Europe and America.<sup>181</sup> The complete adoption of “capitalist”-style advertising emerged as part of this copying, and in 1959 in Zagreb a handbook of marketing, entitled *Propaganda, Reklama, Publicitet*, was published; it contained examples of the techniques listed in the title such as Coca-Cola, Buick, Ford, Mercedes, Douglas aircraft, and the products of Dr. Oetker.<sup>182</sup>

A look at articles in the press attests to how Yugoslavia turned definitively into a consumer society, and one on the Western model at that. The column “Bazar's Shop Window” demonstrates the possibility of acquiring luxury goods that were not customary in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. In the store Fontana on Knez Mihailova

<sup>178</sup> *Југославија 1918–1988: statistički godišnjak*, 113.

<sup>179</sup> Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 266; Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 46.

<sup>180</sup> P.H. Patterson, “The New Class: Consumer Culture Under Socialism and the Unmaking of the Yugoslav Dream, 1945–1991,” Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2001, 3; Ćirić, “Na ušću dveju reka ispod Avale,” 30, 34–35.

<sup>181</sup> Patterson, “The New Class: Consumer Culture,” 3.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

Street in the center of Belgrade, people could buy foreign cigarettes (Winston, Chesterfield, Salem, LM, Kent, Piccadilly, Astor), high-end alcoholic beverages (Vat and Johnny Walker whisky, Martel and Courvoisier cognac, Bacardi rum and Gordons gin), cosmetics (Helena Rubinstein, and perfumes by Chanel, Dior, and Nina Ricci), along with canned goods, teas, and coffee.<sup>183</sup> In this store they also sold watches “of the James Bond type.”<sup>184</sup> Advertisements and notices in *Politika* for Johnny Walker and Haig whisky, plus for Martini, speak to how foreign luxury drinks came to be in great demand.<sup>185</sup> In the 1960s, Yugoslavs had access to something else about which people in the countries behind the Iron Curtain could only dream—to buy things through the West German catalog *Quelle*.<sup>186</sup> Foreign cigarettes, such as Winston, Chesterfield, Salem, LM, and Kent, also became available.

Yugoslavs took more and more trips, and in the possibilities for travel, as one more of the indicators of the rise of a consumer society, there was a place for the American company Pan Am. The promotion of Pan Am started with an article about the landing of an airplane from that company every Friday at the Belgrade airport, in the context of a promotion of exotic journeys around the world, which, considering they were being advertised in the daily press, were apparently accessible to a portion of the Yugoslavs, too. The first Pan Am plane to make a trip around the world landed at the Belgrade airport on May 3, 1963, and the reception it received on that occasion, which was prepared by the Pan Am representation in Belgrade, involved several hundred invited guests and was described in detail in the press. The article covered the distinctive characteristics of Boeing aircraft, as well as the attractiveness of the flight attendants and the professionalism of the pilots.<sup>187</sup> In the next few years, the press continued to promote Pan Am flights, using phrases in the newspapers such as “the most experienced pilots,” “the most comfortable flight imaginable,” “with gra-

<sup>183</sup> “Izlog Bazara,” *Bazar*, October 1, 1966, 40.

<sup>184</sup> M. Kapor, “Tiranija mode,” *NIN*, June 11, 1967, 7.

<sup>185</sup> *Politika*, September 18, 1966, 55.

<sup>186</sup> Advertisements for orders through the *Quelle* catalogue appeared in *Politika* throughout all of 1964. The catalogue itself was in color, and it offered 25,000 items for sale.

<sup>187</sup> Dž. Husić, “Boing brži od noći,” *Ilustrovana politika*, May 14, 1963, 12.

cious air hostesses who speak multiple languages,” and “with food prepared according to recipes from the kitchen of Maxim’s in Paris”; by this means Pan Am, to judge from the media tributes and the space devoted to advertising in the Yugoslav press, was singled out as the best airline.<sup>188</sup>

All things considered, Yugoslav society in the 1960s, with its self-service grocery stores, Pan Am trips around the world, international luxury beverages in the stores, and mail-order catalog shopping, was a consumer society, and in a Yugoslavia such as that, with strong political, but also cultural, ties with the United States, everyday American life became, unavoidably and in many ways, domestic reality.<sup>189</sup>

### THE AMERICAN DREAM AT THE ZAGREB FAIR

Consumer society, which advanced with lightning speed in the 1950s and 1960s, a time that corresponds to the “rise” of the Cold War, became, also, a means of propaganda, and a part of American cultural imperialism aimed not only at ideological enemies but also at the rest of the world.

A special kind of propaganda was dedicated to the participation of countries in various trade fairs (also called expos) and exhibitions. An upsurge in fairs and expositions started in the mid-nineteenth century, when world fairs<sup>190</sup> began to be organized, where the latest achievements were used to demonstrate the material wealth of the displaying countries; the main attractions were the national pavilions, in which the newest accomplishments of individual states were on display.<sup>191</sup>

An important part of American propaganda, then, was tied to the appearance of the United States at big international expos, and one of its exhibits, “People’s Capitalism,” became a major weapon in the

<sup>188</sup> *Politika*, August 21, 1964, 24.

<sup>189</sup> Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 145.

<sup>190</sup> Among the most famous of these were the fairs in Paris (1889, 1900, 1937), New York (1939), and Brussels (1958), with which many landmarks of today are associated, such as the Eiffel Tower, built for the World’s Fair in Paris in 1889, and the Atomium, part of the displays at the World’s Fair in Brussels in 1959.

<sup>191</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 3.

fight against the “people’s democracies.”<sup>192</sup> Grasping the importance of this type of propaganda, President Dwight Eisenhower initiated in 1954 a “consumer-oriented offensive,” in which the American government would sponsor, starting in 1955, pavilions at fifteen expositions. By 1960, the United States had taken part in ninety-seven official exhibitions in twenty-nine countries.<sup>193</sup> And these exhibitions, with the picture of America as a place where people live in freedom, peace, and comfort, became a tool in the struggle against the Soviet Union.<sup>194</sup> It appears that it was the apartments and houses with modern furnishings, the new automobiles, functional kitchens with the latest machines, self-service grocery stores, and television that attracted the attention of visitors to the American pavilions at exhibitions and expos around the world, and that it was precisely these symbols of the American way of life that won followers.<sup>195</sup>

The high standard of living in American society was most apparent in the quality of housing and in the way people furnished their homes. And the brunt of propaganda related to the representation of “typical American houses,” furnished with the widest range of appliances. That the displays of the American way of life were successful is borne out by the thousands of people from East Berlin who, until the erection of the Berlin Wall, went over to West Berlin, so that they could at least observe, if they could not afford it themselves, the blessings of a consumer society. East German visitors to the exhibition “America at Home,” held in West Berlin in 1950, were fascinated most of all by the kitchen and electrical appliances, compelling them to conclude that the American way of life looked to be good and enticing.<sup>196</sup>

Of all the American exhibitions, the most famous, however, was the one that bore a deep imprint of the Cold War; namely the American

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<sup>192</sup> Jakovina, “Narodni kapitalizam protiv narodnih demokracija. Američki supermarket na Zagrebačkom velesajmu 1957. godine,” 470.

<sup>193</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 13–15.

<sup>194</sup> Kushner, “Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 195: Domestic Politics and Cultural Diplomacy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* vol. 4, no. 1 (Winter 2002), 6–7.

<sup>195</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 37.

<sup>196</sup> G. Castillo, “Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 40, no. 2 (April 2005), 269–270.

National Exhibition that was organized in Moscow in 1959. An agreement on cultural cooperation between the USSR and the United States, which was signed in 1958, opened the door to an exchange of such exhibitions, and they were carried out the very next year. The Soviet exhibition was held at the New York Coliseum, and the American one was in Sokolniki Park in Moscow, with the wish on both sides that they would be “dedicated to the development of science, technology, and culture of every country.”<sup>197</sup> Although, to outside appearances, the point was to make a gesture of good will, tense political relations turned to the exhibitions into yet another battleground in the Cold War.

The Americans used their exhibition in Moscow to relate a story about the United States to millions of citizens of the USSR<sup>198</sup> and thereby to create direct influence over the masses, through the United States Information Agency (USIA) and with the “assistance” of President Eisenhower. The main idea that the Americans wanted to propagate was “freedom of choice and expression,” and it was decided to place the main emphasis on consumption and consumer society, because it was thought that they would have the greatest impact.<sup>199</sup>

Guided by this idea, the Americans showed visitors to the exhibition various foodstuffs in modern packaging, Pepsi-Cola, and IBM computer that responded in Russian to visitors’ questions about life in America, twenty-one new types of cars, and displays of clothing, toys, and kitchens, and so on. There were also huge color screens with projections of American roads, college campuses, supermarkets; a cosmetic salon by Helena Rubinstein; a “rock and roll show”; all kinds of appliances for housekeeping; and Disney films.<sup>200</sup> From the items on display it was clear that the target group for American propaganda here was visitors of all ages—men fascinated by automobiles, women mesmerized by kitchen furnishing and grocery stores, young people interested

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<sup>197</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 161.

<sup>198</sup> According to Walter Hixson, the number of visitors to this exhibition exceeded 2.7 million, and those were just the official numbers: Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 201. Laura Belmonte refers to over 3 million visitors: Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 88.

<sup>199</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 161–162, 165.

<sup>200</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 174–175, 203–204; Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 87–93; Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 204–229.

in fashion, rock-and-roll, and Pepsi, and children fired up by Disney and toys. In essence, it was a fascination with the capitalist economy.

The opening of this exhibition was marked by an event that is known as the “kitchen debate” between Nixon and Khrushchev. This unusual argument reached its climax in a well-appointed modern kitchen, in which Khrushchev announced, “You Americans think that the Russian people will be fascinated by these things. The fact is our new kitchens are outfitted like this.” This provoked further discussion between the representatives of the superpowers, and it showed that things that at first glance seem inconsequential, such as the issue of kitchens, could lead to extremely sharp exchanges.<sup>201</sup>

As for the houses and apartments in the USSR, arguably the best evidence is in the buildings with communal apartments or in *khrushchyovkas*, built during Khrushchev’s rule, which were a unique institution of social control and also a testament to a low standard of living.<sup>202</sup>

The American National Exhibition enjoyed great success, and according to the conclusion of the USIA, it charted the biggest psychological effect out of all the activities the USA organized in any of the communist countries.<sup>203</sup> Despite the announcements from the Soviet news agency TASS that the American house on display had about as much to do with “the typical house of the average American worker” as the “Taj Mahal is the typical house for a textile worker from Bombay, or Buckingham Palace is typical for an English miner,” the image put forward of the American way of life remained for a long time in the memories of Soviet visitors.<sup>204</sup>

American pavilions, as a means of propaganda and the transferal of the American way of life to other nations, cultures, and ideologies, found a place in Yugoslavia also, at the chief Yugoslav fair and trade show, called the Zagreb Fair, which was a place of encounters between East and West, but also a place for European appearances by the non-aligned nations. Therefore, in observing the Yugoslav position in the Cold War, as well as the Cold War struggle of the superpowers “for hearts and souls,” it is important to analyze the manner in which the

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<sup>201</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 169.

<sup>202</sup> On life in Soviet *komunalka*, see S. Boym, *Common Places*, 125–165.

<sup>203</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 210.

<sup>204</sup> Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 90.



superpowers represented themselves in Yugoslavia and what kind of resonance this had.

An overview of the reminiscences of visitors to the Zagreb Fair suggests that people went to it infatuated with the West and hoping “to get a peek at the achievements of rotten capitalism. The pavilions of our fraternal communist and nonaligned countries were more spacious and had ‘objective’ advantages, but the American pavilion elicited the most interest.”<sup>205</sup>

America participated in the Zagreb Fair for the first time in 1955, with the exhibition entitled “Atoms for Peace.” From that point on, the American pavilion was part of the fair every year, with the goal of enabling Yugoslav visitors “to see and understand American life.” In the first decade of U.S. participation, the exhibitions “Self-Service USA” (1957), “Agriculture USA” (1964), and “Technology Improves Everyday Life” (1965) met with the greatest response.<sup>206</sup>

At the 1957 Zagreb Fair, various symbols of America were on display, and a variety of things vied for the attention of the visitors. Next to a large photograph of the American president, Eisenhower, there were ultra-modern agricultural implements, vending machines for cigarettes and sweets, a Coca-Cola dispenser, washers and dryers, electric grills, air conditioners, and television, but the main exhibit, indeed, taking up the main space in the pavilion, was an American supermarket, which demonstrated “simple and pleasant shopping, but not symbols of American abundance.”<sup>207</sup>

The American participation in the Zagreb Fair also had an economic dimension in addition to the propagandistic one; four hundred American firms, in collaboration with the State Department, were involved with the U.S. exhibition in 1960. That year visitors were shown a wide range of exhibits—the “kitchen of the future,” models of satellites, an American pharmacy, a workshop for auto repairs, and the newest models of cars.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Ž. Ivanjek, “Zašto smo 60-ih voljeli Velesajam,” *Jutranji list*, September 21, 2009, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/template/article/article-print.jsp?id=310480>.

<sup>206</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 10, no. 4, April 1967, 39.

<sup>207</sup> Jakovina, “Narodni kapitalizam protiv narodnih demokracija,” 472–473.

<sup>208</sup> “Američki proizvođači pokazat će više proizvodnih noviteta,” *Vjesnik*, September 9, 1960, 2.



In 1961, the theme of the American exhibition in Zagreb was “the constructive use of free time.” It presented summer vacation cabins and ski cottages, a working swimming pool, electronic pedagogical equipment, and the space capsule in which John Glenn flew into space.<sup>209</sup> At the next year’s fair, America focused on the development of its agriculture, with an exhibition on “the path of American groceries from the field to the table,” which had over half a million viewers.<sup>210</sup> The exhibit “Technology Improves the Standard of Living” also met with great success in 1965; there, visitors were able to see all advantages brought by advancements in technology: contemporary home workshops, modern washing machines, dry cleaning and ironing of clothes, and medical and dental apparatuses.<sup>211</sup>

From year to year, the American effort at the Zagreb Fair grew more advanced, and for the 1967 event, a new pavilion was built. It measured approximately seven thousand square meters, and its exterior facade was dominated by “the imposing letters U-S-A.”<sup>212</sup> At that fair, the displays in the American pavilion featured a “system of home television, ‘walkie-talkies,’ radio equipment for both sending and receiving, micro-film readers, and electronic calculators,” as well as offices with contemporary furnishings. From the world of “heavy machinery,” visitors to the fair could view the most up-to-date tractors, a private plane for managers, truck-mounted cranes, and the newest Chevrolet automobiles.<sup>213</sup> According to reports in *Pregled*, 475,000 people visited the American pavilion at the Zagreb Fair that year.<sup>214</sup> Among the visitors was the Yugoslav president, Tito, who declared the American exhibition to be “very interesting” and said that the newly constructed building was a “very good pavilion”; he was also very enthusiastic, according to *Pregled*, when, a few minutes after viewing the exhibition, a “quick photograph” of his visit was presented to him for his inspection.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> “U susret velesajmu,” *Vjesnik*, September 8, 1961, 4.

<sup>210</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 7, November Supplement 1964, 3.

<sup>211</sup> S.S., “Dani SAD i Italije,” *Vjesnik*, September 10, 1965, 6.

<sup>212</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 10, nos. 8–9, August–September 1967, 37–38.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 11, no. 7, July 1968, 38–39.

<sup>215</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 10, no. 10, October 1967, 36.

In the scope of the Zagreb Fair held in 1968, an exhibition was organized showing the various ways that American companies prepare for international commercial fairs, and modern packaging technology was on display. For the entertainment of younger visitors, the Americans put up in front of the pavilion a “playground of packages,” with pop art versions of containers in which children could play while their parents took in the exhibition.<sup>216</sup>

In 1969, among the chief exhibits were “television telephones,” equipment from the spaceship Apollo, modern housekeeping appliances, and an experimental automobile, the Ford Cobra. There were also curiosities such as dresses made of paper, which one could shorten with scissors.<sup>217</sup> Special attractions included the capsule from Apollo 8 and a model of the “gigantic Saturn 5 rocket,” which was 11 meters high. This was the most extensive display of American space equipment in Yugoslavia up to that time.<sup>218</sup>

America was not the only country to make use of the Zagreb Fair for propaganda purposes. Yugoslavia did so as well, in a demonstration of its position in the world of diplomacy. On average, each year saw about fifty countries participate in the fair, from all over the world.<sup>219</sup> Although the Yugoslav press reiterated the presence of the East, the West, and the nonaligned states, it is indicative that the large article about the opening of the 1969 fair was illustrated with just one photograph: “President Tito, with his wife Jovanka, examines the capsule of Apollo 8.” It is also indicative that there is a detailed description of Tito’s visit to the American pavilion, while the “other side,” the USSR, was represented by an exhibition of photography dedicated to Lenin. One other fact suggests an emphatic American propaganda point: namely, that Tito, in the American pavilion, was received that year not just by the American ambassador but also by Frank Shakespeare, the director of USIA and Richard Nixon’s special representative.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>216</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 11, nos. 8–9, August–September 1968, 35.

<sup>217</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 12, nos. 8–9, August–September 1969, 40.

<sup>218</sup> *Pregled*, vol. 12, no. 10, October 1969, 36; “Svemirsko vozilo na Velesajmu,” *Vjesnik*, September 13, 1969, 14.

<sup>219</sup> S. Ostojić and V. Jovović, “Predsednik Tito otvorio Zagrebacki velesajam,” *Politika*, September 12, 1969, 5.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

The propaganda activities of the two superpowers at the fairs were important because of how they were presented to the Yugoslav public. While the Americans, for their part, pointed above all to the magic of consumer society, the Soviets offered something different. In 1957, with the Americans displaying a self-service grocery store, the Soviets showed off a large turbine, steam boilers, machines for drilling deep wells, and helicopters.<sup>221</sup> At the 1964 fair, the Soviets had a “model of a hydroelectric plant that was supposed to be built in Krasnoyarsk.”<sup>222</sup> A record number of visits to the Soviet pavilion was posted in 1969, when the displays were “models of equipment for thermal electric plants, brewing equipment”—but also balalaikas and fur coats for women.<sup>223</sup> Pioneers and books by Soviet authors made up the standard iconography of a Soviet pavilion, and since, to some degree, these things were part of everyday life in Yugoslavia, its citizens were likely not desirous of seeing them at the Expo; they were expecting something new and different. A comparison of the exhibits of the two superpowers, with one displaying the materials of mass consumption and the other the books of Soviet writers inter alia is a confirmation of Riesman’s 1951 satire *The Nylon War*.

Ideological differences and differences in way of life in the United States and USSR were obvious when it came to cars. The Americans always attempted to bring to the fairs the newest, and also the most extravagant, models. Thus in 1961 they displayed a go-kart used for racing, as well as dragster.<sup>224</sup> The 1963 exhibition was devoted to automobiling in the United States, and the items ranged from the first car, a Ford, to the newest and most modern ones.<sup>225</sup> At the 1969 Zagreb Fair, the Ford Cobra, which cost \$100,000, competed with the Moskvich 412, which cost \$1350.<sup>226</sup> The difference in price itself pointed to the

<sup>221</sup> Z. Gugić, “Prvi posjetilac,” *Vjesnik*, September 8, 1957, 2.

<sup>222</sup> M. Sobol, “Predsjednik Tito u paviljonima,” *Vjesnik*, September 6, 1964, 2.

<sup>223</sup> “Sovjetska velesajamska izložba,” *Vjesnik*, September 8, 1961, 4.

<sup>224</sup> “U susret velesajmu,” *Vjesnik*, September 8, 1961, 4.

<sup>225</sup> M. Sobol, “Predsjednik Tito u paviljonima Velesajma,” *Vjesnik*, September 8, 1963, 2.

<sup>226</sup> B. Mejovšek and M. Stančić, “Prvi put izlagači sa svih pet kontinenata,” *Vjesnik*, September 12, 1969, 3; “Sovjetska velesajamska izložba,” *Vjesnik*, September 17, 1969, 8.

radically different standards of living in the two superpowers, and, what is more, that year the Americans also exhibited a vehicle with six tires designed to drive on the moon.<sup>227</sup> The scenario with cars, where on the one side are arrayed Moskviches, Trabants, and Wartburgs, and on the other there are Fords, Chevrolets, and Chryslers, is rounded off by the information that, at that time, there was one automobile for every three hundred people in Russia, while the European average was one for every ten people, and in American it was one per three people.<sup>228</sup>

Generally speaking, the Soviet exhibits showed how people, with the aid of machines, could serve the state, and the American ones showed the state, with the assistance of a wide variety of household appliances, could serve the individual. Looking at the blessings of the American way of life, personified, so to speak, in prefabricated swimming pools and luxury automobiles, and comparing them with the Soviet offerings of turbines, the average visitor to the Zagreb Fair invariably opted for the American dream, wishfully thinking it might become his or her own reality.

By its presence at fairs and expositions, including the Zagreb Fair, America did not “export” only nylon stockings, kitchen gadgets, large houses and de luxe cars, but also consciousness of freedom, a freedom that ranged from the surplus of free time brought by washers and dryers, and dishwashers and numerous other household appliances, to the freedom of choice of desired merchandise from among hundreds of articles in contemporary self-service grocery stores.

The “export” of freedom, as in a plethora of other instances of American propaganda, whether it was couched in terms of film, jazz, rock and roll, abstract expressionism, or of kitchens and grocery stores, was of course not done directly, because in that case it would surely not have made it through the “ideological customs barriers” at expos in Moscow and other places behind the Iron Curtain, not in Belgrade either. The “export” was oriented toward “opening people’s eyes” to how daily life could look. The American vice-president, Nixon, confirmed this during the “kitchen debate” with Khrushchev, by saying: “We hope to show our diversity, and our right to choose. We do not

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<sup>227</sup> “To vidimo, dotičemo prvi put,” *Vjesnik*, September 14, 1969, 3.

<sup>228</sup> “Eastern Europe: a Fiat in Ivan’s Future,” *Time*, July 16, 1965, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,834019,00.html>.

wish to have decisions made at the top by the government officials who say that all homes should be built in the same way.”<sup>229</sup> The real message here was the democracy is not an exclusively political and ideological question, but that it implicitly includes freedom in the broadest sense of the word.

### CAPITALISM FOR SALE IN THE SUPERMARKET

Another patent example of the Americanization of Yugoslav society is the transfer of the model of the American self-service grocery store to Yugoslavia. This model led to significant Americanization of daily life in the whole world (but above all in Europe). Shopping in self-service groceries became the dominant form of shopping in the second half of the twentieth century, offering freedom of choice, bringing satisfaction to customers, and showing the material progress and growth in the standard of living of certain polities.<sup>230</sup>

By the 1940s, self-service groceries had become the dominant form of shops for the sale of foodstuffs in America, and supermarkets were one of the characteristic features of the American system and of free enterprise, as well as a symbol of the American way of life.<sup>231</sup> As a new concept in shopping, but also as a profitable undertaking, the self-service grocery started to spread across Europe in the period following World War II. Its “conquest” of European spaces corresponds with American political expansion. The true popularization of the American system of self-service ensued in the 1950s. The first country to embrace this American “invention” was Switzerland, which had 150 such stores by 1955, and, along with Switzerland, the other pioneers in the promotion of self-service grocery stores in Europe were Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries.<sup>232</sup> In many countries in Europe, and some in Asia, these stores were accepted because of supermarkets that had been exhibited at international trade shows and

<sup>229</sup> Cited in Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 217.

<sup>230</sup> Bowlby, *Carried Away: The Invention of Modern Shopping*, 3.

<sup>231</sup> de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 384.

<sup>232</sup> M.M. Miller, “Shops and Stores,” in *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, vol. 2 (New York, 2001), 291, 298; Bowlby, *Carried Away*, 155.

expositions, which in turn were organized on the initiative of the U.S. government; this shows that it was a calculated kind of Americanization through a new aspect of shopping.<sup>233</sup>

The American system of self-service groceries had been, according to reports in the Yugoslav press, imported by forty-six countries by the beginning of the 1960s, and that included the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>234</sup> Thus, by 1958, self-service grocery stores already existed in Yugoslavia, although not in Austria or Italy, something that the Yugoslav press loved to emphasize.<sup>235</sup>

The first Yugoslav supermarket, really the first self-service grocery store in southeastern Europe, was opened on December 17, 1956, in the small town of Ivanec near Zagreb.<sup>236</sup> *Večernji vjesnik* noted that this “unusual store” had a powerful attractiveness for people, and as a curiosity it stressed that “one door is labeled ‘entrance’ and the other is ‘exit,’” and that the lady of the house can pick for herself the wares she wishes to purchase.<sup>237</sup> The next major step in the Americanization and modernization of shopping was the opening of a supermarket in Zagreb on December 29, 1957. Three years later, there were thirteen such stores working in Croatia, and there were plans to open twenty-one in Zagreb alone by the end of 1960.<sup>238</sup>

Belgrade received its first supermarket in 1958, on Cvetni trg, and at the time it was the largest self-service grocery in Yugoslavia. As a “repainted” version of the American grocery from the Zagreb Fair the year before, it confirmed both the process of Americanization and the concretization of American activities at the trade fairs. This was,

<sup>233</sup> T.D. McEnroe, “Supermarket: samoposluga u doba distribucije,” *Pregled*, February 1962, 24.

<sup>234</sup> It was also noted that at that time West Germany and England had around four thousand self-serve grocery stores: M. Josimović, “Trgovina bez tezge,” *Ilustrovana politika*, May 16, 1961, 4.

<sup>235</sup> *Samoposluga “Cvetni trg”: desetogodišnjica osnivanja prvog supermarketa 1958–1968*, 4. The first self-serve grocery in Italy had, despite these assertions, opened in Milan in November 1957: de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 378.

<sup>236</sup> Eduard Kušen, “50.godišnjica prvog samoposluživanja u Jugoistočnoj Evropi,” [http://www.iportal.hr/clanak\\_.asp?ID=2528](http://www.iportal.hr/clanak_.asp?ID=2528).

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> R. Popović, “Zagreb: samousluživanje je pobedilo,” *Politika*, 20 October 1960, 8.

arguably, the reason why the American propaganda magazine *Pregled* was especially favorably inclined toward this particular supermarket, labeling it the first of its kind in Yugoslavia, and one which in its furnishings and size was the closest to the American model.<sup>239</sup>

The decision to open the first Belgrade supermarket was taken at a session of the Workers' Council of "Vračar" Commercial Enterprises on August 15, 1957, when it was agreed that it would "purchase a store for self-service groceries."<sup>240</sup> A symbol of Yugoslavia's self-managing socialism, the Workers' Council played a key role in the acceptance of a symbol of American capitalism. The original resolution involved opening up a "fairly modest and inexpensive" supermarket, but that was quickly changed in favor of a wholesale adoption of the American model, so that on April 28, 1958, Belgrade got "a supermarket arranged and furnished along the lines in use in the USA, the country in which self-service grocery stores originated. It was a complete supermarket, the one that had been on display in the American pavilion at the Zagreb Fair, which 'Vračar' had bought and transported to Belgrade."<sup>241</sup>

The idea of the supermarket, which had been one of the main exhibits in American pavilions at expositions around the world, became a noteworthy part of American propaganda in 1956, and "supermarket exhibits" had turned out to be a real hit at exhibitions in Paris, Vienna, and Rome in 1956 and 1957.<sup>242</sup> The supermarket on view at the Zagreb Fair in 1957 was the most spectacular "supermarket exhibit" up to that time, and it exceeded what was previously the greatest American success in this form of propaganda, the "supermarket exhibit" of Rome, which had seen about 400,000 visitors, after which Italian businessmen bought the display equipment and opened the first Italian supermarket chain. Supplying the grocery store at the Zagreb Fair involved 600 American companies, and the fact that the director of the Yugoslav Information Center in New York held a press conference about the American supermarket at the fair, in the luxury hotel Waldorf Astoria, testifies to its significance.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>239</sup> T.D. McEnroe, "Supermarket: samoposluga u doba distribucije..." 3.

<sup>240</sup> *Samoposluga "Cvetni trg": desetogodišnjica osnivanja prvog supermarketa*, 3.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>242</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 62–63.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–65.



In the grocery store on display at the fair, the possibility of touching everything there was an added attraction, and another draw was the hostesses, who were female students from the University of Zagreb, who pushed shopping carts up and down the aisles and offered various information, while they now and then rewarded certain visitors with products from the shelves.<sup>244</sup> For the first time people were seeing meat packaged in plastic wrap and an American selection of meat products, including specialties such as braised ribs and hot dogs.<sup>245</sup>

In addition to making a powerful impression on visitors, the American supermarket at the Zagreb Fair also affected people in a position to make decisions on many important things, including the fate of self-service grocery stores in a socialist country, something that, shortly after the conclusion of the fair, resulted in a plan by the Yugoslav government to launch, in a short period of time, a chain of sixty similar groceries up and down the country.<sup>246</sup>

The supermarket displayed at the Zagreb Fair in 1957, transported to the center of Belgrade, had an area of six hundred square meters, with twenty meters of refrigerators containing packages of fresh meat, seven freezers for frozen foods (which had not been available up to then in Yugoslavia), and ten meters of fruit and vegetable cases, above which mirrors were hung, along with water-sprayers for cooling and cleaning the produce. There were also cash registers with moving conveyor belts for bringing groceries to the checkout. And from the Americans came some additional assistance—a pair of specialists trained in designing and constructing supermarkets.<sup>247</sup>

According to the recollections of the first manager of the supermarket Cvetni trg, there were sometimes as many as four thousand items for sale in this store, from fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, and children's food, to frozen foods, high-end beverages, bowls, pots, rags, and socks. Individual packs of sugar, coffee, and rice (the latter being something that up to that point was distributed in stores in sacks weighing 50, 80, or 100 kilograms) were a great novelty.<sup>248</sup> These details about the quan-

<sup>244</sup> Jakovina, "Narodni kapitalizam protiv narodnih demokracija," 473.

<sup>245</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 67.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>247</sup> Bisenić, "Ekspanzija počela sa beogradskog Cvetnog trga," 2.

<sup>248</sup> J. Simić, "Prva trgovina u američkom stilu," *Politika*, April 28, 1998.



tity of articles available is all the more impressive when one compares it with America—namely, the American journal *Pregled* remarked that in the average American supermarket one can find between four thousand and six thousand items, which meant that the biggest Belgrade supermarket was not far behind the American ones in numbers of goods.<sup>249</sup>

In no time at all, self-service groceries started, according to reports in the press, “spreading like wildfire,” and soon they numbered 150 in total, in “various cities and villages,” with more than half of those to be found in Serbia. The eighty Serbian stores included thirty-one in Belgrade alone.<sup>250</sup> The “Vračar” chain from Serbia emerged as one of the largest supermarket chains in Yugoslavia in the 1960s; it was joined by “Konzum” from Croatia and “Prehrana” from Slovenia. Of the Belgrade stores that followed the new American model, ten of them were even “akin to the American supermarkets, with an area of as much as 700 square meters.”<sup>251</sup> Statistics about Belgrade show the dynamic growth in supermarkets in the capital: in 1965 Belgrade had 90, but by 1969 it had 155.<sup>252</sup> As for the reception of self-service grocery stores, one only need consider that Tito, during a visit to Slovenija, visited Ljubljana’s “Supermarket,” together with the highest officials in the Slovene government.<sup>253</sup>

Along with the opening of large supermarkets, the opening of smaller self-service grocery stores also represented a novelty. They differed from other small stores in that they carried attractively packaged and presented goods. It is worth noting that by the end of the 1960s such stores had reached the outskirts of towns, that is to say, all the places where new residential areas were springing up. Another development attests to the success of supermarkets and their popularity even in remote villages: a project called “traveling grocery stores” provided for the store in Ivanec to send “mobile stores” with self-service into the surrounding Croatian villages.<sup>254</sup> Here we see an application of one of

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<sup>249</sup> McEnroe, “Supermarket: samoposluga u doba distribucije,” 20.

<sup>250</sup> M. Josimović, “Trgovina bez tezge,” *Ilustrovana politika*, May 16, 1961, 4–5.

<sup>251</sup> S. Selinić, *Beograd 1960–1970: snabdevanje i ishrana* (Belgrade, 2005), 312.

<sup>252</sup> *Statistički godišnjak Beograd 1970* (Belgrade, 1970), 201.

<sup>253</sup> *Borba*, January 5, 1969, 1.

<sup>254</sup> Kušen, “50.godišnjica prvog samoposluživanja.”

the capitalist laws of business—that one should constantly be putting something new onto the market.

Igor Duda's research is concerned with the way the doors opened to supermarkets "from above," from the governmental sphere; he highlights the way the city of Pula, from 1961 to 1965, used its Social Plan for Development to provide for the modernization of existing stores and the opening of a large number of self-service groceries. Thanks to this Social Plan, Pula got its first modern supermarket in the fall of 1962, in which for the first time prepared, packaged food was sold, perishable groceries were stored in large refrigerators, and chickens could be found roasting in electric ovens.<sup>255</sup>

An analysis of the "supermarketization" of Yugoslavia confirms that Americanization was not merely a political process guided by propaganda and accepted for reasons of foreign policy, but rather was also a process of modernization in a range of domains considerably broader than just the political. Much of what was "American" arrived not because it was "American," and not just because of the will of Washington, and Belgrade, but because the times brought it as an element of an improving quality of life. In this, the self-service grocery store is possibly the best example, because it included us, as people realized from its very first strides in Yugoslavia, "in its beautiful successes on the route to modernization," making what was "contemporary and cultural" into "our everyday life."<sup>256</sup>

What is most frequently adduced as the contribution of self-service groceries to the modernization of life is the savings in time and money, above all in the context of the emancipation of women, for "few employed women, and there are more and more of them every day, can spend several hours doing their shopping, although—let's be honest—many of them like doing so."<sup>257</sup> In Zagreb, a female office worker stated: "I take care of my shopping in a small amount of time, I choose things myself, and I will admit to being 'seduced' sometimes by attractive packaging," while a housewife said, "This store liber-

<sup>255</sup> Duda, "Sve je najsuvremenije. Svakodnevica i postrošačka kultura u Puli ranih 1960-ih," 45–49.

<sup>256</sup> M. Sabol, "Poslužite se sami," *Vjesnik*, September 9, 1961, 4.

<sup>257</sup> Josimović, "Trgovina bez tezge," 4–5.

ates me from drudgery.”<sup>258</sup> Mention was made of how the early way of shopping implied going off to the market-place, the fruit stand, the butcher shop, and the dry-goods store, and that shopping in a supermarket saved women a significant amount of time.<sup>259</sup>

The self-service grocer also brought, however, something that no one wrote about—freedom of choice. Removing counters and salespeople as obstacles to one’s personal contact with the goods represented, in fact, both literally and symbolically, another step in the acquisition of freedom. And the supermarket was an important link in the chain of developments that went along with the rise of a consumer society, as the colorful assertion of one woman in Belgrade confirms: she went to the grocery store “for half a kilo of potatoes” but ended up buying “a plastic bucket, a new table cloth with roses on it, a cleaning preparation for remaining flecks of grease, some Russian salad, blueberry juice, dessert ‘Royale’ with a mold, and three hundred grams of sausages from Srem.”<sup>260</sup>

Not everyone, of course, reacted the same way to the appearance of supermarkets and the things they offered. Like with many other “newfangled” phenomena, there remained a strong divide between traditional and modern views. Even the opening of the self-service grocery on Cvetni trg proceeded, in the wake of such a division of views, with a certain fear of new things—for instance, of shopping baskets! Many people did not want to take them, and a military officer announced that it was “a disgrace for me to carry a basket while I’m in uniform.”<sup>261</sup> As in other conflicts involving the traditional versus the modern on the supermarket issue, the desire for modernization won the upper hand and it became the new Yugoslav reality. For instance, an article in *Bazar* gave voice to the opinions of inhabitants of Belgrade about supermarkets. One female office worker found them to be “a salvation for us working women,” and added: “My hours at the company start at 6 in the morning, so there’s no way I can go to the market in the morning. And why would I? In the self-service grocery they have an excellent selection. Everything is nicely sorted and presented

<sup>258</sup> Sabol, “Poslužite se sami.”

<sup>259</sup> Josimović, “Trgovina bez tezge,” 4–5.

<sup>260</sup> Čedomir, “Samousluga obmanjuje oči ili štedi novac,” 4.

<sup>261</sup> Samoposluga “Cvetni trg,” 9.

and within easy reach. When I buy cabbage at the market, I have to throw out a large portion of it.”<sup>262</sup> A female economist also had positive impressions of grocery stores: “The thing that fascinates me about self-service groceries is the overview you get, the layout, the inventory. In terms of those things we lack for nothing compared to similar stores around the world.” A typist showed “symptoms” of a genuine consumer: “I adore supermarkets and have to admit that I’m insatiable . . . When I see something that is nicely packaged and looks delicious, my hand flies toward it as if it’s being pulled by a magnet.” One worker exemplified the highest level of emancipation and modernization when she announced: “I have to brag right off the bat: I don’t go to the supermarket. My husband regularly takes care of that errand.”<sup>263</sup> Perhaps this Belgrade worker, who sends her husband to the store, was swayed by the article in *Bazar*, where, in presenting what a modern American woman is like, that very model of a household division of labor was mentioned, along the satisfaction of women whose husbands do the grocery shopping.<sup>264</sup>

There were, to be sure, also opponents of the Americanization of shopping. One teacher, recognizing both the advantages and the pitfalls of self-service grocery stores, maintained that poultry had an unenjoyable taste because it was stored in concentrate, and that meat packed in plastic bags was surely dangerous to one’s health.<sup>265</sup> One retired woman went even further in her criticism of the new stores, saying that she thought a supermarket “was a giant illusion held up to our eyes. It’s true to say that you can touch everything there and weigh it in your hand. But you cannot get a sample of cheese wrapped up in nylon, or *kajmak* or salami, and you cannot take a bite of an apple to see if it’s sweet or sour, or sample paprika to see if it’s hot.”<sup>266</sup> Actually this pensioner was the only person in the survey who was bitterly opposed to modernization; women who worked outside the home and were more modern (the office worker, the economist, the typist, the factory worker) displayed a readiness for a more modern way of life and

<sup>262</sup> Čedomir, “Samousluga obmanjuje oči ili štedi novac,” 4.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>264</sup> M. Štefanović, “Šta je to Amerikanka,” *Bazar*, January 1, 1965, 6.

<sup>265</sup> Čedomir, “Samousluga obmanjuje oči ili štedi novac,” 4.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

an openness, not just for the adoption of the American model of shopping but also for emancipation and for making the life of the average woman easier. Therefore votes for the marketplace, and against the supermarket, were relatively isolated and anachronistic. In the conclusion of the article about self-service groceries in the illustrated weekly, the author emphasized that there was “an ever larger number of women who have renounced the tasting of cheese from the point of someone’s knife and opted for contemporary, hygienic packaging,” and have in addition accepted the unavoidableness of this novelty.<sup>267</sup>

The popularity of supermarkets was boosted by their constant advancement, and so one Belgrade self-service grocery in 1965 introduced tastings of individual products on a weekly schedule, according to which “on the first day of tastings, everyone who wanted to could try the Russian salad or Lipton cheese, today would be a free tasting of sandwiches of all types, tomorrow *gibanica*, on Thursday ham in aspic, and on Friday savory baked goods and cakes, with *lenja pita* (a kind of crumble apple cake) and pâté on Saturday and stuffed pheasant and stuffed chicken on Sunday.”<sup>268</sup> The Western model of marketing for this was also borrowed, in the certainty that “over the course of gratis, week-long samplings, not many citizens would miss the chance to try these specialties, and by doing so many of them would also become buyers of these gourmet items.”<sup>269</sup> Another major step in the adoption of new forms of the promotion of sales, along the lines of capitalist business practices, was the decision for the grocery stores in the center of Belgrade to begin accepting telephone orders of desired items.<sup>270</sup>

Grocery stores also encouraged the modernization of the food industry, and thus domestic companies making sweets, as well as meat suppliers, began packaging their wares according to international standards.<sup>271</sup> From the start of the 1950s, which are recalled as times of ration cards and poorly stocked stores, to the times of “ham in aspic” and “stuffed pheasants” in the grocery stores, there was less than

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> “Besplatna degustacija,” *Politika*, December 14, 1965, 11.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Č. Čedomir, “Samousluga obmanjuje oči ili štedi novac,” *Bazar*, May 11, 1968, 4; “Roba se može kupiti I telefonom,” *Politika*, August 26, 1969, 9.

<sup>271</sup> Bisenić, “Ekspanzija počela sa beogradskog Cvetnog trga,” 4k.

a decade, which truly presents a picture of dynamic growth in Yugoslavia because of American influences, both through direct financial assistance and through things aimed at changing daily life.

Expanding “supermarketization” and the massive adoption of this new manner of shopping showed that the Yugoslavia of the 1960s was marked by, *inter alia*, a growth in the standard of living and decisive steps toward modernization. But this was, however, only one of the pictures of contemporary reality. The contradictions in Yugoslav society came, in fact, to full expression in the areas of living standards and consumption. At the same time that up and down Yugoslavia roasted chickens began twirling on electrical grills in modern grocery stores, and that citizens, on the main street of the capital, could buy foreign cigarettes, whiskey, or perfumes, in that city there were shortages of bread, of heating oil, and restrictions on the use of electric power.<sup>272</sup> On the one hand poverty, when even the acquisition of bread was a problem and, on the other hand, full supermarkets, which visually were the very image of prosperity—these were at heart the reality that was ever present in the Americanization of Yugoslavia, and not just in the Americanization of its daily life. Richly stocked self-service grocery stores and the shortage of bread were, in this sense, that same as La Mama and the banning of the play *Second Door on the Left*, or pop art and criticism of Yugoslav modernists in the world of painting. Both La Mama and pop art were accessible to narrow circles of people, while the prohibition of certain performances and criticism of domestic artists were messages to the broadest segments of the public regarding the character of society. Therefore it could be said that Americanization represented a kind of “display case of goods” which existed in the world, but not everyone walked by this display case. Coca-Cola socialism was, ultimately, socialism, untouchable in its essence, and Coca-Cola was the adjective, which at any moment could, like every adjective, be erased or exchanged for something else. With the inconsistencies visible in the capital city itself, such as the fact that there was no bread to be had but simultaneously one could get the most luxurious international beverages, it was a certainty that there could be

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<sup>272</sup> See the chronology of events in *Beograd sezdesetih XX godina veka* (Belgrade, 2003).

no talk of visible results of Americanization outside urban centers. In places where people did not go out to the market-place, where everything that one needed could be found in one's own garden, it was difficult for hot-dogs or the rise of consumerism to take hold.

But, with such limitations, the rise of consumerism in Yugoslavia still represents one of the most important trends in the adoption of American values and in the articulation of the desire to achieve the American dream. Purchasing goods in modern packaging in large self-service grocery stores, acquiring the newest kitchen appliances, drinking Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, and cocktails such as Martinis and Manhattans, Yugoslavs, despite the limitations, encountered this dream.

According to Patrick Patterson, this was a hybrid of consumer culture, which, although socialist, was characterized by many obvious similarities to the classical consumer societies of the capitalist West, which turned Yugoslavia into a "crypto-capitalist" or "quasi-capitalist" country.<sup>273</sup> From this "quasi-capitalism" the Americans doubtless derived benefits, because in the long run this Americanized Yugoslav society, but the Tito regime also profited from it, because it was precisely on account of this "abundance," which was not at all typical of other countries behind the Iron Curtain and which was sometimes just abundance "in the display case," that the regime was better accepted by ordinary citizens.<sup>274</sup> This was a specific, socialist kind of consumer society, on the American model, or, as Godard would say, it was "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola."

## Americanization Through the Tv Set

Television was, as a technological breakthrough, but also a breakthrough in the spheres of information, propaganda, politics, education, culture, art, and entertainment, one of the greatest phenomena of the twentieth century. The first experimental transmission of a television signal is attested from the 1920s, and the first regular television programs appeared in Great Britain in 1936 and America in 1939.

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<sup>273</sup> Patterson, "The New Class," 4, 29.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–27.

Although in the 1930s television was still in its infancy, even then its propaganda potential was realized by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, that is to say, by countries with totalitarian regimes. Television's real ascendancy, which continues today, began in the 1950s, when television took from film the number one spot as the most popular form of entertainment for the majority of the populations of Europe and America.<sup>275</sup> At that television, along with radio, became the most widespread and favorite aspect of entertainment and pastime, with the goal of feeling the emptiness that many people felt when they did not know how, or with what, to fill their free time. This medium, therefore, did not have a particular target population, but rather it was, and remained, directed at all social strata and all age groups, and television, particularly by the 1960s, had the biggest audience among all mass media.<sup>276</sup>

Although founded and developed as a means of entertainment and information, television became an important "player" in international affairs, something that manifested itself most obviously from the end of the 1980s on with the rise of new technologies and with "live war," whereby viewers all over the world could follow, from their easy chairs, the wars in the Gulf, Bosnia, or Somalia.<sup>277</sup> Even before that, television worked toward the "internationalization," or actually toward globalization, and also toward the Americanization of the world, by dint of the newly developed possibilities for satellite transmission. It was in the 1960s that television phenomena that were inseparably bound up with America come into view: the broadcast of the moon landing and the boxing matches of Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali). Because of its openness, viewers in Yugoslavia were among the more than 700 million people around the globe who followed the moon landing, and who watched, with great excitement, the boxing matches between Cassius Clay and Sonny Liston.<sup>278</sup>

Thanks above all to television, the specific character of the second half of the twentieth century, which reflected so much on Yugoslav

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<sup>275</sup> D. Mek Kvin, *Televizija: medijski priručnik* (Belgrade, 2000), 13.

<sup>276</sup> Hauser, *Sociologija umetnosti*, vol. 2, 156.

<sup>277</sup> P.M. Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945*, (London and New York, 2003), 83–84.

<sup>278</sup> Mandić, *Šok sadašnjosti: pristup medijskoj kulturi*, 198–200.



reality, included newly created icons that no longer originated just in the world of popular culture but also came from the world of politics and even of scientific achievements. TV, for example, brought U.S. president John F. Kennedy and his wife to the screens of Yugoslav viewers.

People admired Kennedy's youthfulness and his brilliant political career, as well as the country's first lady, Jackie Kennedy. Although the Kennedy administration coincided with the peak of the Cold War, and in Yugoslav relations this was the period of the greatest chill in the post-1948 period, Yugoslav press presented him as "a man who passionately loved, and believe in, peace."<sup>279</sup> Kennedy's meeting with Tito, which received a tremendous amount of publicity in Yugoslavia, and his overall charisma definitely affected the positive view of the Yugoslav public toward Kennedy, despite the tensions between Belgrade and Washington during Kennedy's administration.

But the thing that had an undeniable impact on the Yugoslav public, even stronger than Kennedy's presidency, was his tragic demise, to which citizens around the world could tune in on their TV screens. The shots in Dallas aimed at the most important man in the most powerful capitalist country also unsettled the citizens of socialist Yugoslavia, who were following this global happening via various media. Newspapers went through multiple editions, there were breaking news reports on the radio, and television carried special shows and the burial of the American president.

The Yugoslav public did more than just follow this event in the media in the days following the assassination; it also showed its emotions in various ways. The city council of Kosovska Mitrovica renamed one of the streets in that city after Kennedy, and the council in Zagreb launched an initiative to name a street or a square after him. By 1969, there were Kennedy Streets in Skopje, Zagreb, and Belgrade.<sup>280</sup>

Among the new icons that Yugoslavs adored in the twentieth century were U.S. astronauts, and the peak of this adoration came with the landing of Apollo 11 on the moon, in July of 1969, the television cover-

<sup>279</sup> V. Savić, "Pucanj u hrabrost," *NIN*, December 1, 1963, 3.

<sup>280</sup> M. Lazić, "Ubistvo Džona F. Kennedija u svetlu jugoslovenske stampe," *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju*, vol. 14, nos. 1–3 (2007), 113–114. "Ulica nazvana Džon Kenedi," *Pregled*, February 1969, 41.

age of which numbers among the most significant moments in the history of the century. As the press reported, “many people spent the night next to the TV set,” and “many of our citizens experienced the placing of the first people on the moon as an event in their own lives.” A seventy-year-old man named Muja Maksić, from the Bosnian village of Podrečje, showed, for instance, the level of interest in this “event of the century”; in search of a television, he walked on foot to Mostar so that he could see “this miracle,” and in Bihać workers themselves collected money and purchased four televisions for work so they could follow the happenings. Things were buzzing along the Adriatic, too, where several hundred tourists jostled for position in front of televisions set up in hotels and at resorts.<sup>281</sup> The moon landing was also followed in young people’s dormitories and camps—at the youth work action in Novi Beograd, for instance, on the main commons, a huge screen was set up for presenting the accomplishment of Apollo 11.<sup>282</sup> Owing to the astronauts’ success, Americanization was soon felt even in the bestowal of children’s names, where, for instance, in the small Serbian city of Svetozarevo (present-day Jagodina) twins born on the day of the American landing received the names Neil and Edwin, after astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin.<sup>283</sup> Another index of the mood after the moon landing is the fact that a Montenegrin hunter fired off a salute from his gun in the center of Nikšić “in honor of those brave astronauts.”<sup>284</sup>

The culmination of the adulation of the American astronauts came three months later, on the occasion of their visit to Belgrade, when, in the scope of their “Mission of Good Will,”<sup>285</sup> they visited their only communist country, Yugoslavia.<sup>286</sup> Their stay was punctuated by a mass reception at the airport, where they were pelted with flowers, and by a drive through the city in an open Cadillac, where they were greeted by “tens of thousands of citizens” in a “delirium of enthu-

<sup>281</sup> “Kako su naši građani doživeli istorijski događaj,” *Politika*, July 22, 1969, 5.

<sup>282</sup> *Mladost*, July 24–31, 1969, 6.

<sup>283</sup> “Sinoc u gradu,” *Politika*, July 16, 1969, 13.

<sup>284</sup> “Kako su naši građani doživeli istorijski događaj,” *Politika*, July 22, 1969, 5.

<sup>285</sup> Their world tour called Giant Step Apollo 11 lasted from September 29 to November 5, 1969, and provided for visits to twenty-two countries. They were in Belgrade on October 18–20, 1969.

<sup>286</sup> For more detail, see Vučetić, “Soviet Cosmonauts and American Astronauts in Yugoslavia: Who Did the Yugoslavs Love More?,” 188–205.

siasm,” waving American and Yugoslav flags. The Pioneers joined in the general enthusiasm, performing a song, composed especially for this event, “Dear Edwin, Michael, and Neal, welcome to our country, you are awesome.”<sup>287</sup>

The massive size of the viewership, demonstrated both with the broadcast of President Kennedy’s funeral and the journey to the moon, made television into an important propaganda tool. America, of course, could not operate directly inside Yugoslavia, because this was not yet the era of cable television and the free choice of channels. Rather these were the years of strictly controlled media, but America was, on this issue like on many others relating to other parts of mass culture, making calculations based on long-term goals. It was probably America’s assumption, as analyses of TV show, that the media had a significant impact on the way social realities are seen, and so therefore, by presenting American films and TV series, another way of affecting the consciousness of viewers had been found. This would serve the long-term acceptance of the various codes of American culture and the American way of life.

In the Americanization process carried out by means of the TV screen, countries behind the Iron Curtain had, because of the total control of the media as one of the means of controlling the whole of society, effective defensive mechanisms, and it was not easy for America to make brazen propaganda. In the case of Yugoslavia, America also had no need to do that, for, to judge by the schedule of the channel Yugoslav Radio-TV, Yugoslavia was itself propagandizing for America’s benefit, perhaps unwittingly, for from the beginning of its “television era” it devoted a notable amount of time to American TV series and films.

The first experimental Yugoslav television show was broadcast on TV Zagreb on November 29, 1956.<sup>288</sup> The selection of the holiday known as Republic Day, which was at that time the biggest state holiday, when the government presented the population with its suc-

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>288</sup> TV Belgrade experimented with a TV program on August 28, 1958, and TV Ljubljana did so on October 23 of that year. For TV Skopje, the starting date for broadcast of its own show was June 5, 1964, and for TV Sarajevo it was March 15, 1969. See Andrić and Otašević, *Nisam gledao*, 46.

cesses in the development of the state and society, was surely not accidental, and it attests to the potential expectations of the new medium. Yugoslav contact on a mass scale with television first occurred, however, on August 23, 1958, when TV Belgrade began broadcasting an experimental program during the International Technology Fair. At eighty sites around the city, televisions were set up so that as large a number of people as possible could follow the start of TV programming; several TVs were also set up in the homes of political leaders.<sup>289</sup> Continuous broadcasting of programming on Yugoslav Radio Television (YRT) began on November 29, 1958, that is, once more on a day of general state celebrations. Three TV studios joined together in a common Yugoslav TV network (Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Belgrade), with the agreement that Television Ljubljana and Television Zagreb would each provide 30 percent of the content of the joint programming, and TV Belgrade 40 percent.<sup>290</sup>

Along with the openness to Western programming, YRT also demonstrated, from its beginnings, an openness to the West formally; it was, for instance, a member of Eurovision from 1960 on, the powerful association created by Western radio and TV stations. The countries of Eastern Europe had, until 1993, their own association, a parallel to Eurovision—the union of East European stations, or Intervision.<sup>291</sup> Color television also reached Yugoslavia from the West, and the first TV broadcast in color was organized in the Trade Union Hall in 1965, when representatives of all the Yugoslav TV studios, together with officials from the French Embassy, watched a specially broadcast program from Paris.<sup>292</sup>

The initial stage of television broadcasting was followed by a small number of television sets and subscribers. In Belgrade in 1961 there were 14,154 subscribers, but by 1965 the number of television owners had climbed to 78,916, and then by 1969 it was 184,904.<sup>293</sup> Coun-

<sup>289</sup> M. Otašević and B. Andrić, "Strašljivi div," in *Beograd šezdesetih godina XX veka* (Belgrade, 2003), 130.

<sup>290</sup> Pušnik, "Flirting with Television in Socialism: Proletarian Morality and the Lust for Abundance," 231.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>292</sup> "Televizija u boji," *Politika*, November 18, 1965, 11.

<sup>293</sup> *Statistički godišnjak Beograda 1965* (Belgrade, 1966), 191; *Statistički godišnjak 1970* (Belgrade, 1970), 211.

trywide, there were in 1960 30,000 subscribers in Yugoslavia, but by 1965 the number was already 563,000, with the number rising to 1,692,000 by the year 1970.<sup>294</sup> From 1968 on, the number of black-and-white TVs was registered in the statistics, and in that year 28.1 of heads of household owned them, with that percentage jumping in 1973 to 53.5 percent. The acquisition of a TV set was an indicator of status, and equally an expression of the wish of citizens to join the world by means of the small screen.<sup>295</sup>

So we see that television in Yugoslavia became, with the growth in the number of TV sets, a symbol of modern society, making a giant leap from the broadcasting of just a few hours of evening programming at the start of the 1960s, through cooperation with the Eurovision information system, to the creation of conditions for the production of programs in color by the next decade.<sup>296</sup> The penetration of television and its ascent in the 1960s were a part of the general growth in living standards, but they were also stimulated by the ever more observable endorsement of Western trends.

Politicized TV talk shows, plus reports from group work projects, factories, and Tito's trips, as well as numerous entertainment shows made by domestic studios but under the influence of Western stations (usually RAI), all gave the impression of a socialist *dolce vita*; they had as their goal, with the full control and guidance of the authorities, showing and confirming the projected reality of socialist Yugoslavia. American films and TV series, transmitted just a few minutes after the presentation of domestic realities, introduced the citizens of Yugoslavia into the American dream, day in and day out. What television offered—that, for instance after watching young Yugoslav volunteers with spades and shovels riding along in trailers behind tractors, one would then see young Americans in the show *Peyton Place* in houses with modern furnishings and in luxury automobiles—opened up the possibility of direct comparison between various realities and inevitably led people to take sides.

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<sup>294</sup> *Jugoslavija 1918–1988: statistički godišnjak* (Belgrade, 1989), 388.

<sup>295</sup> M. Dragičević Šešić, "Privatni život u vremenu televizije," in *Privatni život kod Srba u dvadesetom veku*, ed. M. Ristović (Belgrade, 2007), 742.

<sup>296</sup> Ćirić, "Na ušću dveju reka ispod Avale," 38.

The orientation of YRT's content, with its obvious reliance on a large number of American series and films, and in the context of research results that show that among Yugoslavs TV-watching (to follow series or films, with the viewing of news shows or big sporting events farther down the list) was either in first or second place for a pastime, alternating with social gathering with friends, demonstrates that YRT, either consciously or unconsciously, played a key role in the process of Americanization of Yugoslav daily life via the television set.<sup>297</sup>

One possible explanation for this situation can be attributed to the rating of viewership of television shows. American series with reliably high ratings, could function as effective "bait" for people to watch what came before them, such as the daily news or some other informational or political show, since as a rule people watched television from early on in the evening until bedtime.

The success of American TV shows in the processes of Americanization was not a Yugoslav peculiarity; rather, it was a general phenomenon. Philip Taylor described it by noting that the popularity of the shows *Dallas* and *Dynasty* in the 1980s was part of the execution of a kind of "Marshall Plan of ideas."<sup>298</sup> One of the foremost theoreticians of popular culture, John Fisk, also wrote about the phenomenon of *Dallas*,<sup>299</sup> as did the cultural studies analyst Ien Ang,<sup>300</sup> concluding that *Dallas* put into the spotlight important themes (gender relations, relations between races, class relations, the American spirit, the American family, etc.), which were necessarily attractive to the most diverse viewers in the most varied environments, and the American world view, even if just through the model of a TV soap opera, entered homes across the world, or, to put it as John Fisk did in the case of *Dallas*, it was an issue of "a supermarket of meanings in which viewers choose and then introduce what they have chosen into their own culture."<sup>301</sup>

<sup>297</sup> Lj. Bročić, "Slobodno vreme gradskog čoveka," in *Beograd—sociološka studija* (Belgrade, 1977), 238.

<sup>298</sup> Taylor, *Global Communications*, 85.

<sup>299</sup> Fisk, *Popularna kultura*, 54–55, 152, 211–213.

<sup>300</sup> I. Ang, "Dallas i ideologija masovne kulture," in *Studije kulture*, ed. J. Đorđević (Belgrade, 2008), 329–338.

<sup>301</sup> Fisk, *Popularna kultura*, 152.

The schedule of YRT in the 1960s included some of the most popular U.S. TV shows, the majority of which make the various lists of the most popular series.<sup>302</sup> All genres were represented: medical dramas (*Ben Casey*, *Dr. Kildare*), soap operas (*The Long, Hot Summer* and *Peyton Place*), detective/crime dramas (*87th Precinct*, *Perry Mason*, *The Naked City*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*), Western series (*Bonanza*, *Caravan*), science fiction (*Lost in Space*, *The Conquerors*), and so on. All these shows became part of the everyday life of people whose social experience was different from the experiences of the protagonists of the series, as John Fisk argued in the case of *Dallas*.<sup>303</sup>

One of the first American shows that gained great popularity was the series *Dr. Kildare*,<sup>304</sup> which, at the same time it was coming to Yugoslavia, was “being picked up by all of Europe.”<sup>305</sup> Women were especially fond of this series, being charmed by Richard Chamberlain, who played the role of the doctor. The Jugoton record company even released a single that contained four songs from the show, further evidence of its popularity.<sup>306</sup> The series *Ben Casey*,<sup>307</sup> disseminated by TV Zagreb in 1968, and watched in Slovenia since the year before, also belonged to the same genre of medical drama.

In the year that *Dr. Kildare* was at the peak of its popularity in Yugoslavia (1964), other popular American series on YRT were *The Dick Powell Show*<sup>308</sup> and *87th Precinct*,<sup>309</sup> while in last place was the French crime series *Inspector Leclerc*. In 1965, the American shows

<sup>302</sup> See, for example, Gordon and Gordon, *American Chronicle: Year by Year Through the Twentieth Century*, 581, 590, 599, 608, 617, 626.

<sup>303</sup> Fisk, *Popularna kultura*, 211.

<sup>304</sup> *Dr. Kildare*, about a young staff doctor named James Kildare, ran in the United States from 1961 to 1966 and featured 190 episodes.

<sup>305</sup> “Ričard Dik Čemberlen novi idol televizijske publike širom sveta,” *Filmski svet*, no. 499, July 23, 1964.

<sup>306</sup> “Ploča nedelje,” *Filmski svet*, no. 496, July 2, 1964.

<sup>307</sup> This is another hospital drama. *Ben Casey* is a young surgeon in America; the show was produced by ABC and lasted six seasons (1961–1966) with 153 episodes.

<sup>308</sup> The American series *The Dick Powell Show* lasted for two seasons of thirty episodes each (1961–1963). The host and star of the show was the American actor Dick Powell (1904–1963).

<sup>309</sup> The American show *87th Precinct* was an NBC production that ran in 1961 and 1962.



mentioned above continued to be shown, with the addition of *The Naked City* and Hitchcock's crime films,<sup>310</sup> as well as the British series *The Saint* starring Roger Moore.<sup>311</sup>

In America the favorite genre of TV series had been Westerns up to the 1950s. After that point, police series took over the top spot; their themes were devoted to questions of "justice" and had main characters who were "lonely, brutal men."<sup>312</sup> In Yugoslavia in the 1960s, the most popular crime series was *87th Precinct*. Although Party functionaries realized that this show constituted "quite perfidious propaganda, for in it American policemen are skillfully depicted as humane and compassionate," and because it "makes propaganda on behalf of American police,"<sup>313</sup> there were no consequences to these evaluations, and the series was not removed from the television repertory. It is possible that American series were used to fill out the Yugoslav TV schedule, despite occasional criticism, because, among other reasons, it was the most accessible material, which shows that they were acquired in accord with American programs of incentives, as were films and record albums.<sup>314</sup>

The show *Bonanza*<sup>315</sup> premiered in Yugoslavia on October 23, 1966.<sup>316</sup> Newspapers often ran articles about the Cartwright family and their life on the Ponderosa Ranch, and the popularity of this series is underscored by the fact that the special correspondent of *TV Novosti* from Hollywood wrote analyses of Paramount in which he conversed with actors from this series. It was also often mentioned that this show was popular in America and that it ran there for nearly an

<sup>310</sup> These films were shown under the aegis of the two American series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, which together featured 363 episodes, and which NBC and CBS produced and disseminated in the United States starting in 1955.

<sup>311</sup> "Nove filmske televizijske serije u novoj godini," *Filmski svet*, no. 525, January 21, 1965, 29.

<sup>312</sup> Mek Kvin, *Televizija*, 101.

<sup>313</sup> IAB, GK SKS Beograd, K-257, October 28, 1968.

<sup>314</sup> Marković, *Beograd između Istoka i Zapada*, 491.

<sup>315</sup> The American series *Bonanza* went on for fourteen seasons (1959–1973) with 430 episodes; it followed the fate of the Cartwright family, who lived on the Ponderosa Ranch in Nevada.

<sup>316</sup> *TV Novosti*, October 22–28, 1966.



entire decade.<sup>317</sup> Precisely because of such popularity, the decision of TV Zagreb to pull this show from the airwaves in February 1967 elicited major dissatisfaction.<sup>318</sup> The fact that TV Zagreb put *Bonanza* back into its repertory, and purchased thirteen more episodes of this Western “at the request of our viewers,” points to the kind of pressure that the public could exert.<sup>319</sup>

Among American series, soap operas enjoyed the greatest popularity. The term “soap opera” was used for the first time, during the economic depression in America, to refer to the fifteen-minute shows broadcast on the radio, which were underwritten by producers of soap and detergent, so that, by sponsoring radio content that was connected with women, their families, and everyday events they could sway the housewives to buy the products they advertised. With the rise of television in the 1950s, these soap operas as TV shows also began to enjoy great success and to dominate the new medium.<sup>320</sup>

With regard to American soap operas, the end of the 1960s saw the beginning of broadcasting of the series that quickly attained the status of one of the biggest American cult series shown in Yugoslavia—*Peyton Place*. Its dissemination started at first “only for advertising purposes and only for viewers in the Croatian region.” Besides being an indication of the Americanization of the content of Yugoslav television, this series also pointed to some new directions in the Americanization of Yugoslav society. As a long-running series, it was the first in which the typical American model of economic propaganda content was adopted. Namely, the duration of the series, and of every episode, was made possible by the fact that each episode was interrupted six times for 15 minutes, so that advertisements could be shown. Thus the socialist society of Yugoslavia experienced a genuine novelty: that Croatian business concerns would buy this expensive series, an explicitly capitalist novelty, so that they could, “by making use of the intriguing story about the nature of people in a provincial city in America, advertise their products.”<sup>321</sup>

<sup>317</sup> Z. Tušek, “Hose i Džo—živi i zdravi,” *TV Novosti*, February 9–16, 1968, 5.

<sup>318</sup> *TV Novosti*, February 4–10, 1967, 3.

<sup>319</sup> *TV Novosti*, December 8–15, 1967, 5.

<sup>320</sup> Mek Kvin, *Televizija*, 47–50.

<sup>321</sup> “Gradić Peyton—sa velikog na mali ekran,” *Filmski svet*, no. 781, December 18, 1969, 7.

Out of all the American series that ran in Yugoslavia in the 1960s, it was *The Long, Hot Summer*<sup>322</sup> that definitely stood out; its run in Yugoslavia began on November 19, 1967, and it was at the pinnacle of its popularity during the stormy 1968. This show was filmed on the basis of short stories by William Faulkner, in which the protagonist was named Ben Quick, “a boy who lived isolated on his farm and who valued, more than anything else, justice.” This “isolated boy” comes into conflict with a powerful banker named Will Varner, whose absolute authority Ben calls into question when he comes to town in search of his father’s farm and, along the way, falls in love with Varner’s daughter Clara.<sup>323</sup>

The actor Roy Thinnes achieved particular popularity in Yugoslavia. He was in the role of Ben Quick, and he had a true blue American biography and was an example of what American cultural diplomacy was busy projecting—that for many Americans the American dream was a reality. While attending acting school, Roy Thinnes had worked delivering milk, hawking newspapers, working as a porter and a taxi-driver, and then a one-episode part had opened Hollywood’s doors for him, and he moved into life as a Hollywood star who lived in a big house in Beverly Hills.<sup>324</sup>

A survey about this series showed that it was the most popular show up to that point, and “it was observed that *The Long, Hot Summer* was becoming more and more dangerous as a rival to cinemas, theaters, restaurants, and cafes” and that on Sundays when the show was on TV between 7 and 8 p.m., the streets and pubs were empty.<sup>325</sup> *Politika* was also interested in the popularity of this series, and it carried out a survey about viewership, accompanied by the analyses of a sociologist and a psychologist about the secrets to Ben Quick’s success. At that time, the assessment was that this particular character had become the idol of the Yugoslav public “because he seemed real was therefore close to our kind of person” and “because our people love heroes who

<sup>322</sup> *The Long, Hot Summer* was an American series that ran in 1965 and 1966.

<sup>323</sup> “Privatno sa Ben Kvikom,” *TV Novosti*, January 5–12, 1968, 29.

<sup>324</sup> “Ben i Klara u 128 cm,” *TV Novosti*, March 1–8, 1968, 6; “Ben Kvik—junak malo ekrana,” *Filmski svet*, February 1, 1968, 22–23.

<sup>325</sup> “Jedva cekam da nedelja dodje,” *TV Novosti*, February 9–16, 1968, 34.

are poor, and who fight against the rich, and expose them for what they are.”<sup>326</sup> From these articles one can see that Ben Quick is truly the ideal hero—a champion of justice, a fighter for the poor (like socialist Yugoslavia), who is couched in American terms (to which Yugoslavia was favorably inclined).

A large number of “marketing moves” were based on the popularity of this series and its main characters. Almost all weekly papers, and good number of dailies, carried photographs of scenes from this series, and people published postcards featuring the faces of the protagonists; there was also a comic strip called *Ben Kvik*, and Ben and Klara were to be found on plates and cups for sale at the time. The well-known Croatian singer Ivo Robić recorded a single in Croatian, titled “The Long, Hot Summer”<sup>327</sup> and the original song from the series was distributed as a prize to readers of the *Radio TV revija*.

Although the series *The Long, Hot Summer* ran in Yugoslavia until April 1968, its popularity was, obviously so great that, immediately after the student demonstrations of 1968, Roy Thinnes visited Yugoslavia. Since his visit was not announced anywhere in advance, it is impossible to know whether bringing this TV star to Yugoslavia was exclusively a marketing move or whether the visit also had a political dimension and served, in some manner, to “balance out” the student rebellion.

With a backdrop of a Yugoslav society that had barely calmed back down after the tremors of massive student demonstrations, new mass gatherings took place, although this time they had a completely different cause. Around four thousand people waited for Roy Thinnes at the Belgrade airport, and from there he went to Novi Sad, where he had to push his way through the crowds to get to the Vojvodina Stadium, where, according to the articles in the papers, the enthusiasm was so overwhelming that one “had to wait an entire fifteen minutes for the ovations to subside.”<sup>328</sup>

The official host and organizer of Roy Thinnes’s stay in Yugoslavia was *TV Novosti*, which, in honor of his visit, published an essay on the

<sup>326</sup> V. Kolar, “Identifikovanje s Ben Kvikom,” *Politika*, March 10, 1968, 10.

<sup>327</sup> “U nasim prodavnicama,” *Ilustrovana politika*, March 26, 1968, 39.

<sup>328</sup> “Dugo toplo leto—drugi put,” *TV Novosti*, June 28–July 5, 1968, 5.

life of this actor.<sup>329</sup> For the public, as for Thinnes's admirers, it was doubtless of greater importance that the just-inaugurated column in this publication, "Roy Thinnes Responds to Your Letters," in which the Yugoslav idol from Hollywood responded to letters that had come in from all corners of Yugoslavia. In part, these were the customary letters from readers who wanted to know more about his career, his private life, his relationship with other actors in the series, or life in America. In this connection Thinnes's answer to a question about American TV programs which, for Yugoslav readers, brought to the surface essential differences, not just about television but also about style of life and the question of freedom in general. The popular Ben Quick, in fact, responded this way about the difference between American and Yugoslav television: "In my country you can watch something at almost any time of day. In my hotel here I tried several times to turn on the television and see your programs. But I didn't see anything other than a white screen. There are probably other differences, too."<sup>330</sup>

Of course these did exist, and they were significant, but it was the American shows, on that otherwise often white screen, that offered an escape from daily life, and from observation of these major differences existing between capitalist America and socialist Yugoslavia.

Regarding the substantive differences in the two societies, it is striking to note the way people addressed the popular American actor in the column "Roy Thinnes Responds to Your Letters." In addition to the usual "Dear, sweet Roy," "Dear Adored Ben," and "Mr. Thinnes," there were others that were illustrative of Yugoslavia's position in the Cold War, such as "Comrade Ben," "Comrade Thinnes," "Comrade Roy," "Comrade Quick," and "Dear Comrade Thinnes." Referring to the American star with the title "Comrade," another of the metaphors for Yugoslav socialist society, where by the look of it impossible things were possible, and frequently also desirable.

The American series carried on YRT carried a new reality into Yugoslav homes—whether it was the transmission of the atmosphere of modern hospitals with Dr. Kildare or Ben Casey, of the cowboy

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<sup>329</sup> The feuilleton by Vojin Vitezica, "Roj Tinis: priča o mom životu—o fudbalera do Ben Kvika," was published on July 5, 1968; the new column "Roj Tinis odgovara na vaša pisma" began that same day.

<sup>330</sup> "Roj Tinis odgovara na vaša pisma," *TV Novosti*, July 19–26, 1968, 33.

saloons of Bonanza, or the American provinces with *Long, Hot Summer* and *Payton Place*, crime sagas such as *Perry Mason* and *87th Precinct*. By watching these shows, Yugoslav society watched and adopted a new, different reality, and this contributed to the changing of everyday life for men and women in socialist society. In this way, "images from America" reached the most remote regions of the country for, especially in small towns, the television, along with the tavern, were "the only salvation from the listlessness and lethargy of provincial life."<sup>331</sup>

Besides these influences, the role of television in the creation and development of a consumer society, as well as in the adoption of "consumer capitalism," was also noteworthy.<sup>332</sup> As analyses have shown, many people, watching television, began to drink a certain coffee, certain other drinks, began to smoke certain cigarettes, and to try certain foods.<sup>333</sup> Based on these analyses, it is possible to hypothesize that Yugoslav viewers in the same way desired having a large, full refrigerator, a luxury automobile, a spacious house with a yard and a pool, and other elements of American daily life as portrayed in the various genres of American TV series. And even the most modest among the viewers wanted something, of course—if not for themselves personally then at least as a social reality, epitomized, for example, in stores well supplied with goods of mass consumption. In harmony with the prevailing spirit of the 1960s, television thus contributed to the evolution of a specific esthetic of appetite for abundance.<sup>334</sup> And the very act of watching television, after all, along with the adoption of codes of American popular culture on the basis of what is seen on the "small screen," represented, as a daily activity, an element of daily life on the American pattern.

If one considers that the Yugoslav government utilized all segments of Americanization for both diplomatic and domestic political needs, there is no doubt that it also did so with Americanization by the TV set; in this case it was aimed more at the domestic than external political scene. Generally speaking, in the verdict of Maruša Pušnik, television in Yugoslavia was a kind of hybrid democracy, in which

<sup>331</sup> Janjetović, *O Internacionalne do komercijale*, 73.

<sup>332</sup> Turnrock, *Television and Consumer Culture*, 142–143.

<sup>333</sup> Mek Kvin, *Televizija*, 235.

<sup>334</sup> Dragičević Šešić, "Privatni život u vremenu televizije."

both socialist and capitalist ideas were incorporated.<sup>335</sup> She concluded, after interviewing inhabitants of Slovenia, that it was precisely due to the opportunity to see the world of the West via television that many viewers in Slovenia (and this is applicable to the whole of Yugoslavia) imagined how they might live like in this other world and identified with many of the actors and TV heroes. They most often emphasized the series *Payton Place* as the reason why they dreamed of life and products that they could not themselves access, and which did not exist in contemporary Yugoslavia. This was, in her view, a kind of American contribution to the rise of a socialist consumer society.<sup>336</sup> Based on this investigation, one must conclude that Americanization by TV set showed the Yugoslavs what all existed and, in doing so, fired their desires for a better life. To the authorities, of course, the dreaming of its citizens about a better life was not harmful, all the more so because in the case of the American series the presentation of this better life was not connected with any explicit political omens.

That is probably the reason that ideological commissions, although they thundered from time to time against Western influences on TV programming, did nothing to inhibit those influences. All it amounted to was the occasional analysis stating that "TV programs should emancipate themselves more fully from the spirit of imitation in relation to the content from Western television stations" and to the general assessment that "people are not paying enough attention to the building up of ideological-political criteria that are indispensable when putting together programming," and also that "our television is accustomed to making considerable use of foreign sources, to broadcasting foreign shows and movies."<sup>337</sup> Some also mentioned that "we find very frequently on entertainments which are copies of Hollywood's rose-colored way of life that must necessarily create antagonism, especially in the lower levels of the working class."<sup>338</sup>

<sup>335</sup> Pušnik, "Flirting with Television in Socialism," 229.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 243–244.

<sup>337</sup> AJ, 507, VIII, II/2-b, 162–169, Zapisnik sa sastanka Komisije za ideološki rad CK SKJ, March 31, 1961.

<sup>338</sup> IAB, GK SKS Beograd, K-209, Zapisnik sa sednice koja je održana u GK, 11. Septembra 1965, o problemima delovanja i uticaja inostrane propagande u Beogradu i o problemu odlaska u inostranstvo radne snage iz Beograda.

In a country where the media were powerfully influenced by the state apparatus, and strictly controlled, and in which the West, despite all of the flirtation with it, was nonetheless “the other side,” it remains to a significant degree inexplicable why American series were so favored. In terms of foreign policy they did not function as specific arguments in favor of the processes of liberalization, for American shows were also popular with broad sections of the public in the West but had no political or ideological weight. The reduced prices of the series suggest another possible answer, but not a complete one, since the authorities, in matters that were really important to it, often neglected to ask about price. The closest answer to the truth is that American series, because of their appeal to ordinary people and their apolitical nature, as well as their tendency to mobilize viewers around “soap operas” instead of existential questions, around the question of what Klara and Ben Quick would be doing next week, for instance, and not why television does not report on higher milk prices—this was welcome to the regime in terms of domestic political issues.

It is not out of the question that American programming, as stated above, represented “bait” to get people to view ideologically colored shows on domestic politics. In these series, ultimately the poor or less wealthy people were honest and righteous, and the dishonest and sleazy characters were bankers, oil-men, and landowners, while the “little people” defended moral values and immorality flourished in the ranks of the rich.

Many questions present themselves when one examines Americanization via the television set; they do not, of course, have one-dimensional answers, in the same way that other questions connected with the study of the Americanization of Yugoslav daily life in the 1960s do not. Did the communist government allow or grant to its citizens the TV series that were globally considered the most popular in the world, thereby showing that Yugoslavia is a part of the bigger world and craves all the same things that interest the rest of the world? The answer is probably yes. Did the concept of entertainment offer an escape from politics and divert the thoughts of people in a socialist country to more cheerful thoughts? The answer is probably yes. Was it better to flee from socialist rooms, from concerns about credit in a daily life that was sometimes somber, into the world of Ben Quick, who was triumphing over the evil and wealthy Varner? Of course, and

from the point of view of the authorities, the answer was also yes. But it is certain, as with film, jazz, rock and roll, cartoons, and Coca-Cola, that the values of American popular culture, embedded in music, film, American TV series, modernism, and the avant-garde, as well as various facets of daily life, protected the socialist system, making it possible for people to have “an esthetic of longing for better things” while changing them in the long run.



# Conclusion

## The American Dream the Yugoslav Way?

The 1960s were a decade when almost everything was possible, when irreconcilable things were reconciled. It was a stormy Cold War decade characterized by many contradictions, and also by the uninterrupted struggle of the superpowers for “hearts and minds.” Within the framework of that struggle, the United States Americanized the world, realizing its short-term and long-term goals. Americanization, in fact, was supposed to undermine the ideological enemy and destroy communism, on the one hand, while having as its goal reshaping the world, over the long term, according to the American model, on the other hand. In the context of the process of Americanization by which the world was changed, socialist Yugoslavia also changed.

Immediately after the conflict with the Soviet Union in 1948, processes of Americanization gripped Yugoslav spaces, but this was not a completely new thing, since these processes had started during the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Research on the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture shows that the American presence in Yugoslavia and Yugoslav openness to American popular culture, was continuous, with the break only from 1945 to 1948, and that the cultural Sovietization in that brief span could be considered an excess, a veering off from the usual Yugoslav “orbit,” which, as far as culture is concerned, from the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and then again after 1950, moved toward the West. Many elements of the Americanization of Yugoslav popular culture from the second half of the twentieth century were already present in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia, the tradition of playing and listening to jazz existed before

World War II, when the first jazz orchestras were formed and the first albums were recorded. There was also the tradition of watching Hollywood movies and idolizing Hollywood stars, and American film enjoyed, by the 1930s, absolute preeminence over other film industries. The American comic book had tradition, too—in Belgrade and Zagreb, even in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, comics such as *Tarzan*, *Buck Rogers*, *The Phantom*, *Flash Gordon*, *Mickey Mouse*, and *Superman* were published. Americanization in postwar Yugoslavia, a country with a new ideology, did not, therefore, fall on unknown ground.

The investigation of Americanization, alongside its importance for following the chief directions of American foreign policy, is also important for the analysis of the transformation of popular culture, mass consumption, and style of life. An analysis of Americanization in the Yugoslavia of the 1960s demonstrates that popular culture, mass consumption, and style of life were all patently Americanized in this decade, and this was most evident in the domain of popular culture (film, jazz, rock and roll, comic books, popular literature, visual arts, etc.).

The breadth of the processes of Americanization, as well as the far-reaching ways that America was of interest to Yugoslav citizens, points to the wide spectrum of values in what was offered and what was accepted. And higher cultural values, such as those of abstract expressionism and pop art, American literature, avant-garde theater, jazz, and films, but also those of Disney's creations, comic books, TV "soap operas," erotic and detective-story magazines, all had their place both in the spread of American influences and in the alteration of Yugoslav reality. For Washington the goal was for everything to work for America, and for the Yugoslav side it was for the breadth of what was offered and accepted to enable a larger selection of options for domestic politics, and even for foreign policy, too. Manipulation on both sides, as a constant in Yugoslav-American relations, was, therefore, present in almost all spheres in which America "sent" its influences and in which Yugoslavia "got" them. What was convenient for America in terms of the realization of its short-term and long-term goals, was also favorable to Belgrade in terms of the cultivation of its pragmatic interests, which were usually related to foreign policy but were always rewarding.

In the Americanization of Yugoslavia, American propaganda took aim at all segments of society—through the trends in popular culture, above all in music and film, it affected broad strata of society,

including the youth; through high culture, abstract expressionism, and avant-garde theater and literature, it influenced artists, but also the more selective elements in the public; through daily life, also, it covered a great range of elements in society. Supermarkets had an impact on the lives of women; cartoons and comic books had an impact on children; and Coca-Cola and jukeboxes influenced young people. Thus it would appear that Americanization reached everyone. In this way, over the long haul, all of Yugoslavia changed. However, Yugoslavia derived benefit from these influences and this propaganda; more precisely, the government in Yugoslavia did so, for by “opening the door” to American popular and high culture, and also to trends in American civilization in the various spheres of daily life, it pacified its society and saw to it that its citizens had at least the illusion of freedom.

It turned out that the acceptance of Western models in popular culture, and the cultural openness toward the West, were even desirable tendencies in the 1960s, for they won points for Tito’s regime in the eyes of the world and of the domestic public, but nonetheless there were clearly drawn boundaries. The openness was welcome as long as it did not threaten any dogmas and as long as it did not lead to questioning of the system. Western culture, a Western standard of living, and idols from the West could, therefore, “pass muster,” and they were even desirable so that the socialist society could show its “human face,” but opposition to dogma was not tolerated, and the many pressures and censorship in the cultural world are evidence of this.

It was on account of this very state of being divided, and because of the various value systems that the Yugoslav government had, that Americanization was a kind of indicator of the contradictions in Yugoslav society. Two images of Yugoslavia in the 1960s speak to these contradictions.

One image of the country in the 1960s is rose colored, and it is most untypical for a country with a communist system. Hollywood hits made their way to Yugoslavia, and American movies dominated the cinema playlists. The movie-going public could watch films loaded with explicit Cold War meaning such as *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Russians Are Coming*, and James Bond movies. Hollywood stars like Richard Burton and Orson Welles played in Partisan films. Big coproductions were undertaken, and they included foreign actors. The American director Nicholas Ray drove his red Porsche around the country already colored

red by its ideology. The greatest masters of jazz performed in Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia hosted its own jazz festival. From jukeboxes issued the sounds of rock and roll—people listened to Fats Domino, Elvis Presley, Bill Hailey, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones, and later to the Doors, Jimmy Hendrix, and Janis Joplin. Yugoslavia turned into the first communist country in which a magazine dedicated to rock and roll was published. The twist was played, and people danced to it, all across the country. Tens of thousands of young people went to the *Gitarijadas*. Large exhibitions of contemporary painting were held, among them exhibitions of American abstract expressionism, and Yugoslavs came face to face with works by Pollock, Klein, de Kooning, along with exhibitions of pop art, at which works by Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg, and others were on display. Belgrade got a Museum of Contemporary Art, built on the same concept as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the city also came to host the BITEF, an international theater festival at which it was possible to see the world's most avant-garde directors, troupes, and theater companies. In Belgrade, the fifth world premiere of the musical *Hair* was performed, and an excerpt of that musical was presented in the Youth Hall on the Day of Youth in honor of Tito's birthday. There were guest performances by Arthur Rubinstein and the most celebrated symphony orchestras, and Yugoslavia also accepted the avant-garde music of John Cage. The works of Henry Miller and John Updike appeared in print. Young people read Salinger and Kerouac, and some of them dip into Marcuse. Parents began to raise their children according to Dr. Spock. People followed American shows with excitement, the same way they viewed Disney's cartoons or comic strips. At newspaper stands around the country international fashion magazines were for sale, but *Playboy* was, too. People drank Pepsi and Coke. Shopping was done in supermarkets. People wore jeans, mini-skirts, and followed op art and hippie fashion. This picture is only a partial overview of the presence of America and the results of Americanization in Yugoslavia in the 1960s. According to this image, though, Yugoslavia was an Americanized, modern, and liberal socialist country, in which Americanization penetrated everywhere and encompassed all segments of society.

The other picture of Yugoslavia in the 1960s is far from rose-colored, but it is, in many ways a picture of reality in communist countries. Milovan Đilas and Mihajlo Mihajlov, critics of the system, are

imprisoned. The national question emerges. Unemployment is on the rise. The trade deficit is increasing. The national currency falls and is devalued. After the economic reforms of 1965, an inflationary jump in prices takes place. A "Declaration Concerning the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language", followed by a Serbian response called a "Proposal for Consideration", further deepens national tensions. Terrorist actions by Ustashi spread uneasiness among the citizens of Yugoslavia. There are demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, demonstrations in Kosovo, and also demonstrations against the conditions inside the country. Amendments to the Constitution open the path to the deconstruction of the country. The powerful pressures on the cultural world are ratcheted up—and the first judicial banning of a film occurs with *Grad*. The organization of Partisan veterans, SUBNOR, starts a campaign against another film, *Jutro*, with the justification that it is a reactionary work that is destructive of the Partisan tradition. Ideological commissions judge the film *Delije* to be extremely negative and nationalistic, while *Zaseda* is pulled from cinemas. Prohibitions are noted also in the world of theater, which is open to the most daring avant-garde experiments but not to questioning of the Yugoslav revolutionary past and communist dogma. *When the Pumpkins Blossomed* is removed from the repertory, after Tito's accusation that it "sullies our social system." The theater company Atelje 212 decides to break off rehearsals of the play *Second Door on the Left*, because it "gives a skewed picture of reality and of the relations between the older and younger generation in our country." And the play *Hats Off* also experienced an inglorious fate—it was yanked after only three performances. The editor-in-chief of *Književne novine*, Zoran Glušćević, was convicted and sentenced to six months in prison. Pressure mounts on the press—*Književne novine*, *Student*, and *Naši dani*. Restrictions on the use of electricity become more frequent. Shortages of bread occur. This picture, like the rose-colored one, is also just a partial overview of Yugoslav conditions.

These two diametrically opposed pictures unavoidably confront us with the question: What was Yugoslav reality truly like? Did it correspond to the picture of unbelievable freedoms and prosperity for a socialist country, or to the picture of strict control, censorship, and great political and economic crises? A situation in which, on the same day, in the center of the capital city, citizens could buy expensive

imported drinks, perfumes, and watches, but not bread, pointed to the schizophrenia of a position between East and West, and indeed of the Yugoslav system as a whole.

The United States invested considerably more in Americanization of Yugoslavia than in changing it, which leads to the conclusion that Washington did not plan to make Yugoslavia a country in its own image; rather it aimed to distance Yugoslavia from Moscow and to demonstrate to the other societies behind the Iron Curtain that a different kind of life was possible.

When considering Yugoslavia in this light, invariably the symbolism of the god Janus, the Roman deity with two faces, comes to mind. According to Roman mythology, these two faces, turned in opposite directions, allowed Janus to monitor simultaneously “entrances and exits, passings by and passings through, so that he could see both inside and outside, right and left, front and back, up and down, and for and against.” Sociology and political science typically make use of the symbolism connected with Janus in order to point out the multiplicity of character of contemporary societies and social systems.<sup>1</sup> The idea of combining Janus with history and historical science as a type of paradigm for illustrating the relationship of a society with history, shows that this symbolism can function as a paradigm for socialist Yugoslavia also, which, especially after the conflict with Stalin 1948, had two faces—that is, two political ones.

The two-faced Yugoslav Janus looks out on the East with one of his countenances, and on the West with the other one; with one face he considers foreign policy, and with the other domestic policy; with one he sees Hollywood, and with the second, the Black Wave; with one he beholds Yugoslav exhibitions in America, while with the second he beholds them in Mongolia or Bulgaria. One face is the face of prosperous Yugoslavia of brotherhood and unity, and the other is the face of Yugoslavia in crisis, a Yugoslavia deeply wounded by internal conflicts; one face is that of a state that supports the most up-to-date developments in art, and the other, the face of a state that carries out censorship. As far as form is concerned, everything was permissible,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in M. Jovanović, “Klio i Janus—licem u lica. Prilog istraživanju problema kontinuiteta i diskontinuiteta razvoja srpske istorijske nauke,” *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1994, 177.

from abstraction, pop art and op art, to spitting on the public, the music of silence, concerts on deliberately out-of-tune pianos, nudity on stage and in literature, but regarding substance, the ideology of brotherhood and unity, communist dogma, the working class, workers' self-management—these things were untouchable and carefully preserved with all means, including judicial ones.

Precisely because the two faces of Janus in the context of the Cold War look simultaneously in both directions, it is possible to define Yugoslavia not as a country between East and West but rather a country that is in both East and West, in accordance with the needs of the government in certain circumstances. It was as if the Yugoslav regime were at any moment prepared to say “no” on key issues to one side or the other, but never to say “yes.” This helped create a society disconnected from reality and unable to position itself in an enduring way in the world. Perhaps the politics of being Janus-faced even contributed to the country's destruction.

The Americanization of popular culture in Yugoslavia seemed to dovetail with Janus's system. People played and sang rock and roll, but also songs of revolution and odes to Tito; they watched American movies but also films about the National Liberation Struggle and the revolution; children watched Disney cartoons but they also took the Pioneer oath and wore red scarves; there was Coca-Cola to drink, but the country also produced Russian *kvass*; it idolized the astronauts of Apollo 11 as well as Yuri Gagarin; crowds went to *Gitarijada* but also to mass gatherings on Youth Day; Belgrade prided itself on its building complex known as the Trade Union Hall, erected in the style of socialist realism, while the headquarters of the Party were located in a newly constructed skyscraper in the American style; the most common thing on the roads was the little domestic Fiat known as the *fića*, yet there were also Ford Mustangs. Considering all that, it is no wonder that the American magazine, *Time*, sized up Yugoslavia as a place that was “half Karl, and half Groucho Marx”<sup>2</sup> and as a “non-communist communist country.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Yugoslavia: Half Karl and Half Groucho,” *Time*, May 7, 1965, [www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,898778-2,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,898778-2,00.html).

<sup>3</sup> “Yugoslavia: Socialism of Sorts,” *Time*, June 10, 1966, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,942012,00.html>.



In a Yugoslavia of this sort, facing two directions and full of contradictions, it would appear that, in the process of Americanization, momentary political gain was of more importance than any deep and lasting trends in popular culture and everyday life. The Yugoslav government showed the West, by institutionalizing American popular culture, just how liberal it was, and, by showing that liberality, it showed the East that one's own road to socialism was possible and brought advantages with it. The predilection for Hollywood, jazz, rock and roll, comic books, pop art, Coca-Cola, and blue jeans represented, nonetheless, the "more advantageous cost" of being viewed favorably by Washington and other Western centers, as compared to more fundamental ideological softening or yielding. In this regard one could say that, from the position of the Yugoslav government, the potential for a longer or more permanent path of the process of Americanization in popular culture and everyday life could be seen as a kind of collateral profit that had to be "swallowed" because of the political gains.

Besides sending certain messages to both West and East, the Yugoslav government worked with Americanization to a considerable degree in the domestic sphere. It turned out, in fact, as we have seen in the examples of movies, rock and roll, and comic books, that attractive American forms, especially in terms of mass culture, were the ideal frameworks for "packaging" content that suited the authorities. Partisan movies and war films, faced with competition from Hollywood products in Yugoslav cinemas, had ceased to interest young people, and they were "revitalized" by the use of Hollywood's forms—thanks to America. It was in the same way that the most popular local comic-book heroes Mirko and Slavko were created.

Americanization and the orientation toward the West were used as "shock absorbers" for problems facing Yugoslav society, and above all it was nascent nationalism that needed to be "absorbed." The flood of American films on theater playlists, the magazines brimming with movie stars, jazz and rock and roll, American soap operas, hippie fashions, plus the style of dress of heroes of Hollywood movies, self-service grocery stores with Pepsi and Coca-Cola, as well as numerous other aspects of an Americanized everyday life, were, in fact, an opportunity to divert attention from more serious problems.

So one part of the modernization processes in the 1960s Yugoslavia evolved under the aegis and with the help of Americanization. In



the spaces of everyday life, for example, supermarkets were certainly an accomplishment of Americanization, but they were also an important stage in the process of general modernization. A contribution to modernization was even made by the erotic magazine *Playboy*, as *Politika* noted, since it was a challenge “to traditional normative behaviors.”<sup>4</sup>

On the one hand, this could all be interpreted as the great richness of the Yugoslav system, in which everything was possible; on the other, it represented danger, and a kind of confusion, for it often involved linkages between what were apparently unconnected things.

The results of Americanization against the backdrop of short-term, often quotidian, interests of both Washington and Belgrade are beyond dispute. Generally speaking, the most successful short-term result for America was the fact that in Yugoslavia, in the time of the Cold War, Washington had a Trojan horse behind the Iron Curtain and it used it as circumstances demanded from time to time; for Yugoslavia it was the fact that “for an affordable price,” that is, at the cost of Donald Duck, pop art, Ben Quick, La Mama, and Coca-Cola, Belgrade succeeded in presenting itself to the world as “something different,” even as a liberal country.

The issue of the long-term achievements of Americanization, however, is more complex. As some studies of Americanization have shown, there is little point in talking about the “measurability” of its results, for this is a “difficult matter to measure,” and scholars agree that there actually is not a precise, concrete answer to the dilemma of the actual achievements of Americanization.<sup>5</sup>

It is safe to say that, for the Americanization of popular culture and daily life, the situation was more propitious in urban settings, by the very fact that in such situations the supply of such things was greater. The possible quantification of certain phenomena and events from popular culture and daily life in Yugoslavia do, however, offer some perspective on how Americanization picked up pace considerably during the 1960s, and that it did exist to a considerable degree. Things that represented a menace in other socialist countries, could be viewed in Yugoslavia simply as reality. Evidence of this is found in the albums

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<sup>4</sup> “Seksualno obrazovanje,” *Politika*, 12 September 1969, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Mueller, *German Popular Culture*, 1.

produced in Yugoslavia, the Top 40 lists in music magazines, the surveys that were carried out, and the musical influences and idols of local singers, and so on. Naturally, the matter of taste is also important here, and the accomplishments of Americanization, especially when one thinks of jazz and rock and roll, are debatable, particularly when one considers smaller cities and rural areas, in which, according to the studies conducted up to this point, folk music remained the dominant tendency.

As for film, statistics—and not just those connected with urban settings—point to the absolute pride of place held by American film in relation to the film industries of other countries; in addition, American film was what most people wanted to see when they went to the theatre, it received the most attention in the press, and it was even the model for highly regarded Yugoslav Partisan movies. Statistics show the low level of viewership for “art films,” where were frequently the choice of intellectuals and the subject of reviews. In fact, outside of large urban centers there was almost no demand for the screening of European art films that had received rave reviews in movie magazines; in cities the situation was a shade better.<sup>6</sup>

Theater repertoires, plus the number of performances carried out, demonstrate that American writers and hit dramas were among the most viewed in theaters doing contemporary plays. Although repertoires can tell us something about politics, either of the state or of individual theater companies, it is the data about performances that draw our attention to the reception of the shows among audiences and to whether the public enjoyed seeing American authors on its stages. Of course when dealing with art such numbers cannot always be a reliable sign of whether or not the public liked American plays, because, in the theater, more than the text itself it takes the work of a good director and an excellent team of actors, which means that theatergoers might see a given performance if it is good, or if famous actors are playing in it, without taking into account the origin of the text. By that same token, the choice of the drama (national, American, Soviet, etc.) is only one of the factors which, when it is a matter of the theater, affects the popularity of the piece, and it is certainly less important

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<sup>6</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacionalne do komercijale*, 183–185.

than the quality of the presentation itself, and the genre, and the choice of actors.

In art and in popular culture personal taste naturally plays a great role, as does trendiness, which additionally complicates analysis of the range of Americanization in Yugoslavia. Because of the diversity of tastes in the 1960s, especially among intellectual elite, a certain resistance existed toward the Americanization of culture, which was characteristic not only of Yugoslavia but also of the majority of European countries, as attested by the research of Richard Kuisel on the resistance of French intellectuals to American cultural influences and American culture.<sup>7</sup> Thus it was possible and realistic in Yugoslavia, for instance, for someone, to look with scorn on American films but enjoy the works of Godard, Kurosawa, Bergman or De Sica. Or for someone to want to see Sartre's *Dirty Hands* in the theater, and not, for instance, *Hair*. Or to hold jazz and rock in disdain while listening to classical music or adoring Charles Aznavour or Edith Piaf. But, people who read Sartre, watched films by Godard and, let's say, listened to the music of Krzysztof Penderecki, were definitely in the minority, numerically speaking, although they did leave, without doubt, a big impression on the intellectual life of socialist Yugoslavia. Their anti-Americanism, even if it is possible to define it as such, was not engendered by their political relationship with the United States but rather by their stance toward the American culture of this period, over which they opted above all for the high points of West European culture. Just as Americanization was not simply a political necessity of the government, so was anti-Americanism, in the majority of cases, not an exclusively political position.

Of course it was not only representatives of the cultural elite, motivated by esthetic and related reasons, who took part in manifestations of anti-Americanism. Yet public manifestations of this sort, or even political anti-Americanism, were not a common occurrence. The absence of a powerful, broad, or explicit anti-Americanism during the process of Americanization in Yugoslavia in the 1960s was certainly the upshot of the general Yugoslav line in foreign policy and the sacrosanct subordination with which people received the positions from

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<sup>7</sup> Kuisel, *Seducing the French*.

the highest reaches of power and from Josip Broz Tito. Not even the cultural elite “acted out” here, at least not visibly.

As a rare and unusual voice of opposition to mass culture and Americanization, the writer Dobrica Ćosić weighed in with the admonition that “the mass culture of America is the temptation of our backwardness and this culture is conquering our space. We are surrendering joyously to it. There is no serious resistance. And that culture is a true epidemic for unenlightened people.”<sup>8</sup> That culture, however, was exactly the factor that brought about powerful changes in European society after World War II, in addition to its being a powerful means of propaganda. Socialist Yugoslavia had a place in the general currents of postwar Americanization, and these currents (even if they represented an “epidemic” for individuals, or cultural deviation) made its socialist past different from the communist past of countries behind the Iron Curtain.

The achievements of Americanization remain more questionable when considering smaller localities, for there is not enough of a trail, or none at all, concerning Americanization in such surroundings in the archival and press material of that time. It is even hard to ascertain what was on offer in small communities, especially rural ones, and what impact these things had. An occasional boy with a Hawaiian shirt in a small town, an occasional album of rock and roll music, an American film in the village movie theater—who can explain by what means these things turned up in smaller places. The influence from metropolitan areas and big cities was greater than the spread of Americanization and Western ideas itself, because people mimicked life in the metropolitan areas and big cities. In this sense, then, it is certainly impossible to rank the Americanization of places like Surdulica or Donji Lapac with that of Belgrade or Zagreb. In addition, we should not ignore the fact that subtle political games which were, otherwise, an inseparable part of Americanization and the mechanism for it in Yugoslavia, were “more readable” to the elites than to the general public, and that elites—cultural, political, and economic—were concentrated in the big cities. Finally, the Yugoslav authorities did not inform the public via various “conclusions” and “lines of guidance” that American influences were

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<sup>8</sup> AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Informacija o sastanku na Filozofskom fakultetu u Beogradu, December 4, 1969.

desirable, as they did when the actions aimed at “strengthening” the socialist character of society were initiated and carried out, and, in the political domain, in small communities people often did not know whether, at any given moment, Americanization was a desirable process. Nonetheless, some information, albeit fragmentary, does give us a picture of the penetration of various American influences into smaller communities. Although we know with confidence that the notes of jazz and rock and roll flowed from radios, there are no extant statistics that would demonstrate that people listened to this kind of music in the village, nor whether or not there were differences in musical taste between a Slovene and, for example, a Macedonian village.

What remains in the memories of contemporaries from villages is that, for instance, the Voice of America was a station that people liked to listen to, and it was a window on the world. In reviews and reports of the American Embassy about this radio station, it is stressed that because of it America is “present in the homes of Yugoslavs and in villages and hamlets from Slovenia to Macedonia.”<sup>9</sup> And sales figures for comic books and X-novels, but also for the magazine *Filmski svet* from which it was possible to learn a great deal about American stars and American film, reveal that across Yugoslavia American popular culture was available, but how much of it was accepted is a topic for further research by historians, sociologists, and anthropologists.

The historian Dejan Đokić recalls a story that shows infatuation with America. Growing up in Jagodina (then Svetozarevo), the wall in the living room of his grandfather and grandmother was adorned, all the way to his grandmother’s death, with images of the Kennedy brothers, John and Robert, made as tapestry and framed. But these were days, by contrast, when in the majority of homes, especially in smaller towns, the walls were hung with family pictures, pictures from the army, “magnified” pictures of weddings, and perhaps here and there a picture of Josip Broz Tito, or, perhaps, an icon or a cross-stitched landscape; for an image of the Kennedys to be framed and displayed on the wall there surely must have been, in addition to personal affinity, a role for the general atmosphere in the country. We should also not forget, neither in cases like this nor, indeed, in our big pic-

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<sup>9</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 49.

ture of Americanization in smaller communities, that departures for “the promised land,” emigration, which had started at the end of the nineteenth century, and American-Serbian and American-Yugoslav relations before the period of socialism had already created a certain emotive connection with America; it is possible to fit Americanization into this framework as well. Although the family memories of Dejan Đokić were too faded for anyone to recall exactly how the tapestry of the Kennedy brothers had made its way to Svetozarevo, what is important is the fact that the Kennedys were esteemed and loved, and it is also worth noting that this picture remained in the living room up to the death of an old woman, therefore indicating it was an important constituent part of her life.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the difficulty and to some degree also the superficiality of “quantifying” Americanization, for in such processes quality, depth, and results are more substantive than quantified numbers, all of these fragmentary phenomena do point out how the Americanization of popular culture, along with the enrichment of people’s quality of life and of their daily existence, strongly influenced social change in general. Data on how many pairs of jeans, for instance, were imported into socialist Yugoslavia are an important economic indicator, but the very fact that jeans were imported into a socialist country is an illustration of its social and indeed political conditions. Changes, as the result of the Americanization of popular culture and the improvement of people’s standard of living, did not, to be sure, make Yugoslav society free and democratic; they did not exchange the “dictatorship of the proletariat” for an authentic democracy, but with these changes the process unfolded in a more or less lasting way.

Americanization could not make out of Yugoslavia a country like America, nor could it steer Yugoslavia’s inhabitants in that direction, but it could present another kind of life, and stimulate desire for it. It was, therefore, a kind of encounter between the values of one part of the world, the values of America, with a smaller place that was fully in the know about those values but not always in a position to turn them into reality.

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<sup>10</sup> I thank Dejan Đokić, professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, for these recollections of childhood and “mediated” Americanization.

One key question, however, is to what degree America changed Yugoslavia in substance. According to the historian Ljubodrag Dimić, “being fixated on the West did not mean accepting its fundamental values.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, by the end of Yugoslavia’s existence as an entity, these had still not been accepted. Frequently these things developed out of curiosity about what life in America was like, and not out of an articulated wish that they become thus in Yugoslavia. Fundamental Western values—the principles of Western democracy and a multiparty system—remained far from Yugoslav reality throughout the entire Cold War period.

A similar situation prevailed with the substantive achievements of modernization, which frequently were a part of the broader processes of Americanization. Modernization in Yugoslavia unfolded at a superficial level.<sup>12</sup> It all boiled down to form, and not substance, as was the case with many accepted kinds of Americanization in Yugoslavia, too. Form was omitted from political interests, with great caution as to the costs, but nearly impenetrable barriers were set up around content, in an act of ideological implacability. Communists, as the self-identified avant-garde, did not, to put it simply, omit the substance of the avant-garde, nor that of modernization processes. And in everyday life, in the changing of everyday life in the direction of Americanization and modernization, there were many boundaries that it was not possible to cross. With the music of John Cage, or the publishing of unabridged versions of Henry Miller’s novels, which were, by the way, censored in America, modern artistic forms arrived, but not complete freedom to create or freedom outside of an ideological framework. This latter kind of freedom, exemplified by washing machines and other household appliances that were produced for the most part in privately owned factories in the West, made life easier, but with no afterthought that the private factories for those products should be allowed to open up in the Yugoslav space. Perhaps it was the lack of fundamental comprehension and acceptance of America and modernization, the lack of acceptance of the essence of Americanization and processes of modernization, that contributed an epilogue to Yugoslav-American relations at the end of

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<sup>11</sup> Dimić, “Beograd šezdesetih,” 66.

<sup>12</sup> Janjetović, *Od Internacone do komercijale*, 289.

the twentieth century, when, after the demolition of one system, a new one grew up, in the context of which a significant portion of politics was simply anti-Americanism, something that up to this point was atypical for Serbia and Yugoslavia, with the exception of the period from 1944 to 1948.

With this superficial, and even shallow, reach of Americanization, society nonetheless developed under the influence of codes of Western culture and Western values that it accepted. The principle of freedom, as one of the cornerstones of Western democracy, arrived in Yugoslavia with more limitations, and not by way of a multiparty system with freedom of speech and activity, but, arriving as it did, in a limited way through jazz, rock and roll, film, and indeed through everyday things that are at first glance banal, such as going to a supermarket, made people accept the essence of the meaning of the word freedom, even if it was not possible to carry it out completely and consistently. This freedom, by its acceptance with limitations, fundamentally altered Yugoslav society and the worldview of ordinary people.

Of course socialist daily life, with its difficult economic circumstances and complicated political ones, could not as easily become Americanized as daily life in some Western lands. The American dream, simply put, could not become Yugoslavia's reality. Multipurpose shared rooms in newly built blocs were not the same thing as modernly appointed apartments in skyscrapers; the houses and yards in Yugoslav villages did not resemble American farms; the *fićas* on potholed roads were not the same thing as the Buicks on large interstates. Despite all these differences, the image of America as a promised land remained carved indelibly into the consciousness of the population of socialist Yugoslavia.

The American way of life, however distant it was as a reality, was present all the time as a possibility, via movies, TV series, illustrated magazines, and in that way it became part of Yugoslav life. For the American dream to come true, however, was a distant prospect. For it to come true in Yugoslavia, key things were missing: private initiative, a different ideology, and different overall reality. The link between the American dream as a wish, and Yugoslav reality as a possibility, led to the strange linking of the American dream with Yugoslav reality.

The American dream in the Yugoslav way is, like Americanization in Yugoslavia, actually a story of form and substance, of adopted form



but barely touched substance, in which one of the basic questions is “who got what.” America got a great deal through the process of Americanization, although it did not ultimately have the political upshot that might have been desired. An American report about the millions of dollars invested in Tito’s Yugoslavia attests to this fact, and it ends with the terse conclusion: “It was worth it.”<sup>13</sup> Although Americanization did not realize its potential goal of democratizing the Yugoslav of that time and destroying communism, it did change a great deal about Yugoslav society.

It was on people that Americanization left its deepest imprint. Ordinary people in the country of self-managing socialism, regardless of whether they looked at America longingly or not, were in a position to enjoy Americanized popular culture and an Americanized daily life, although the legacy of that culture and daily life was to have, as was almost always the case in Yugoslavia, another side. In comparing the realities of life with the extreme uncertainty of political life in the country, an image of the American dream on Yugoslav terms emerged, cast in rosy Hollywood hues, as did the “cadres of the Black Wave” à la Pavlović and Žilnik, as well as the grayness of life under socialism.

All of the contradictions of Yugoslavia in the 1960s, and Yugoslavia’s Janus face and that American dream in the Yugoslav way, seemed to be constantly pushing the question of the fate of a Yugoslav society in which completely impossible contradictions were possible. Despite the Hollywoodization of Yugoslav reality, that particular “film” did not have a happy ending.

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<sup>13</sup> FRUS, 1964–1968, vol. 22: *Eastern Europe*, 180. Memorandum from the Under-Secretary of State (Katzenbach) and the Under-Secretary of Agriculture (Schnittker) to President Johnson, Washington, November 30, 1966, [http://state.gov/www/about\\_state/history/vol\\_xvii/v.html](http://state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xvii/v.html).



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- 3:10 to Yuma* (Delmer Daves, 1957, USA)
- Apache* (Robert Aldrich, 1954, USA)
- Bathing Beauty* (George Sidney, 1944, USA)
- Ben-Hur* (William Wyler, 1959, USA)
- Bitka na Neretvi* (Veljko Bulajić, 1969, Yugoslavia)
- Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967, USA)
- Brat doktora Homera* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1968, Yugoslavia)
- Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Blake Edwards, 1961, USA)
- Buđenje pacova* (Živojin Pavlović, 1967, Yugoslavia)
- Cheyenne Autumn* (John Ford, 1964, USA)
- Čovek iz hrastove šume* (Miodrag Mića Popović, 1964, Yugoslavia)
- Dani* (Aleksandar Saša Petrović, 1966, Yugoslavia)
- Delije* (Miodrag Mića Popović, 1968, Yugoslavia)
- Desant na Drvar* (Fadil Hadžić, 1963, Yugoslavia)
- Diverzanti* (Hajrudin Šiba Krvavac, 1967, Yugoslavia)
- Dolina Miru* (France Štiglic, 1956, Yugoslavia)
- Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964, USA)
- El Dorado* (Howard Hawks, 1967, USA)
- Ešalon doktora M.* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1955, Yugoslavia)
- A Fistful of Dollars* (Sergio Leone, 1964, USA)
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966, USA)
- Grad* (Kokan Rakonjac, Marko Babac, and Živojin Pavlović, 1963, Yugoslavia)
- High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann, 1952, USA)
- Žutro* (Puriša Đorđević, 1967, Yugoslavia)
- Kad budem mrtav i beo* (Živojin Pavlović, 1967, Yugoslavia)
- Kapetan Leši* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1960, Yugoslavia)

- Kozara* (Veljko Bulajić, 1962, Yugoslavia)  
*Ljubav i moda* (Ljubomir Radičević, 1960, Yugoslavia)  
*Ljubavni slučaj ili tragedija službenice PTT* (Dušan Makavejev, 1967, Yugoslavia)  
*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford, 1962, USA)  
*Mirko i Slavko* (Branimir Tori Janković, 1973, Yugoslavia)  
*Most* (Hajrudin Šiba Krvavac, 1969, Yugoslavia)  
*Nož* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1967, Yugoslavia)  
*Obračun* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1962, Yugoslavia)  
*On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954, USA)  
*Operacija Beograd* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1968, Yugoslavia)  
*Plastični Isus* (Lazar Stojanović, 1971, Yugoslavia)  
*Povratak* (Živojin Pavlović, 1966, Yugoslavia)  
*Put oko sveta* (Soja Jovanović, 1964, Yugoslavia)  
*Rani radovi* (Želimir Žilnik, 1969, Yugoslavia)  
*Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955, USA)  
*Rio Bravo* (Howard Hawks, 1959, USA)  
*Rio Grande* (John Ford, 1950, USA)  
*Romanoff and Juliet* (Peter Ustinov, 1961, USA)  
*The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!* (Norman Jewinson, 1966, USA)  
*The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956, USA)  
*Shane* (George Stevens, 1953, USA)  
*Signali nad gradom* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1960, Yugoslavia)  
*Skupljači perja* (Aleksandar Saša Petrović, 1967, Yugoslavia)  
*Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939, USA)  
*Sun Valley Serenade* (H. Bruce, Humberstone, 1941, USA)  
*Sutjeska* (Stipe Delić, 1973, Yugoslavia)  
*Torn Curtain* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1966, USA)  
*Tri* (Aleksandar Saša Petrović, 1965, Yugoslavia)  
*The Unforgiven* (John Huston, 1960, USA)  
*Užička republika* (Živorad Žika Mitrović, 1974, Yugoslavia)  
*Valter brani Sarajevo* (Hajrudin Šiba Krvavac, 1972, Yugoslavia)  
*Vera Cruz* (Robert Aldrich, 1954, USA)  
*WR—misterije organizma* (Dušan Makavejev, 1971, Yugoslavia)  
*Zaseda* (Živojin Pavlović, 1969, Yugoslavia)  
*Zlatna pračka* (Radivoje Lola Đukić, 1967, Yugoslavia)



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**1. Josip Broz Tito's visit  
to John F. Kennedy,**  
October 17, 1963.  
Museum of Yugoslavia,  
1963\_231\_025  
Museum of Yugoslavia,  
1963\_231\_033







**2. Josip Broz Tito and  
Orson Welles**  
Museum of Yugoslavia,  
1979\_694\_159



**3. Tito and Kirk  
Douglas**  
Museum of Yugoslavia,  
1964\_256\_100





**4. Tito and Jovanka Broz with Elisabeth Taylor and Richard Burton,  
July 3, 1971.**

Museum of Yugoslavia, 1971\_468\_012,  
Museum of Yugoslavia, 1971\_468\_071



**5. Yugoslav cowboys**  
5.1. Harry Jackson

5.2 Božo Brdarić, “sheriff” from Zadar  
(*Ilustrovana politika*, January 8, 1963)

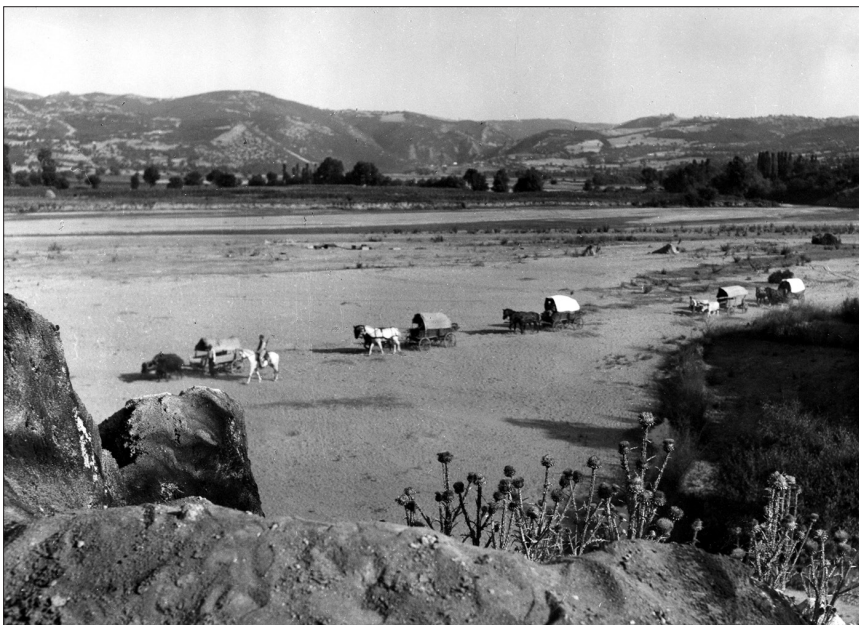


5.3. Miroslav Bukovčić  
– “Cowboy Rodgers”  
from Vrelo by Ub  
(*Ilustrovana politika*,  
January 9, 1968)



5.4. Miroslav Bukovčić  
– “Cowboy Rodgers”  
from Vrelo by Ub  
(*Ilustrovana politika*,  
January 9, 1968)





6. Scene from the movie *Ešalon doktora M*





**7. Scenes from the movie  
*Kapetan Leši***

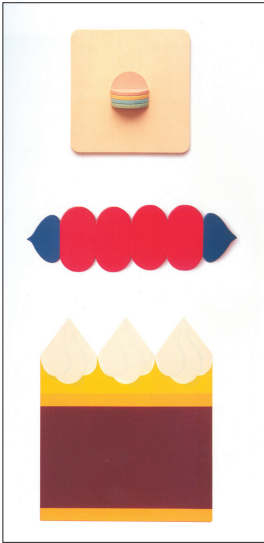


8. Modern gallery in Ljubljana during the Exhibition of Contemporary American Art (1961)



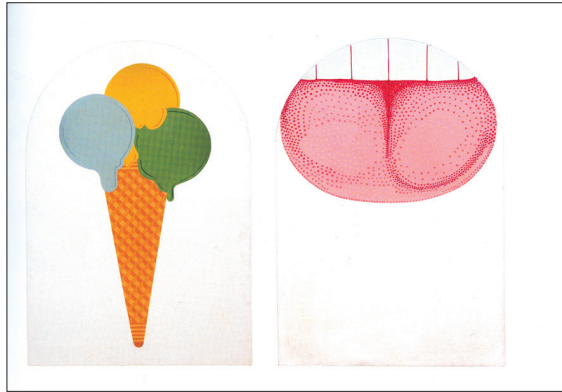
9. Dušan Otašević, *Comrade Tito, O White Violet, Our Young People All Love You*, 1967 (Museum of Contemporary Art)





**10. Pop-Art 1**

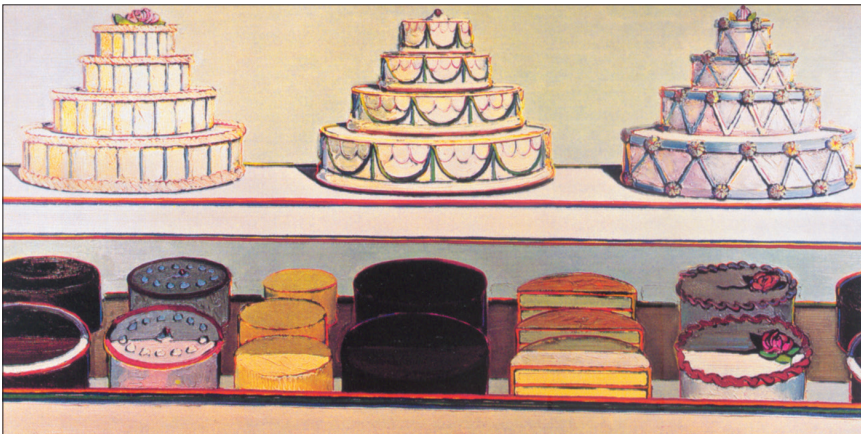
10.1 Dušan Otašević,  
*Cakes* (1967)



10.2 Dušan Otašević, *Yes, Sir!* (1967)

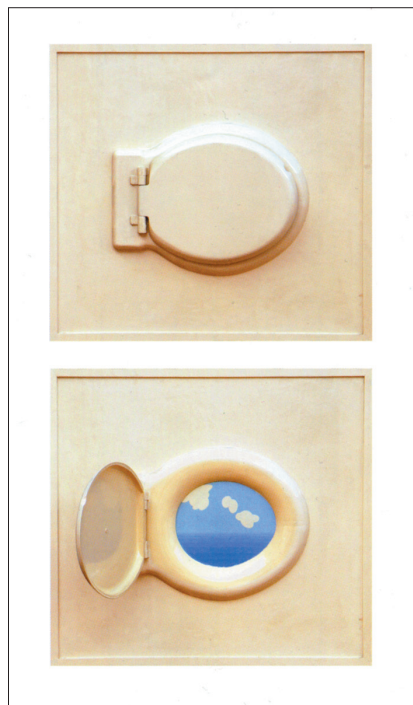


10.3 Claes Oldenburg, *Floor Cake* (1961–1962)





**11. Pop-Art 2**  
11.1 Claes Oldenburg,  
*Soft Toilet* (1966)



11.2 Dušan Otašević, *Sea, sea!* (1966)

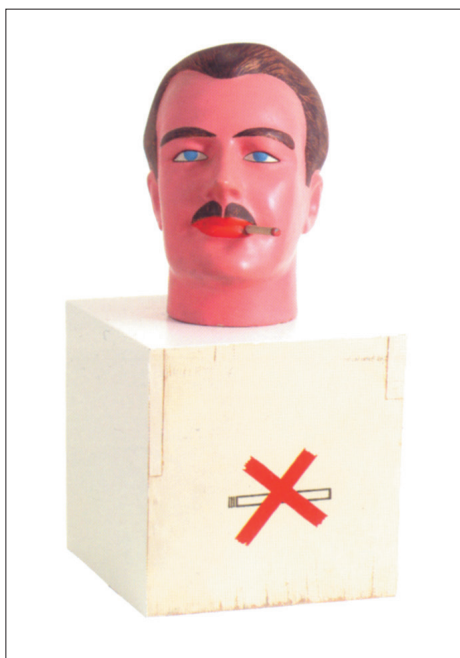


11.3 Tom Wesselmann,  
*Smoker 1* (1967)

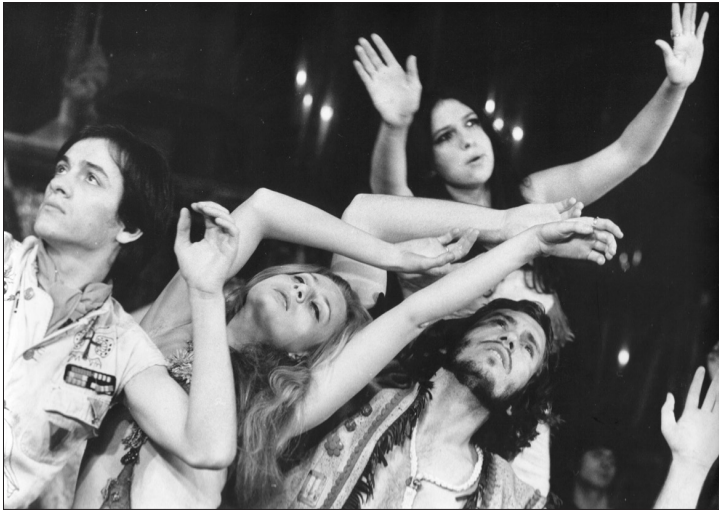




11.4 Claes Oldenburg, *Giant Fagends* (1967)



11.5 Dušan Otašević,  
*Smoker* (1965)



12. *Hair*, Atelje 212 (1969)



13. *Second Door on the Left*, Student Experimental Theater (1969)



14. Fashion inspired by *Bonnie and Clyde* (*Bazar*, April 24, 1968)



15. **Jackie Look** (*Bazar*, December 15, 1965)





16. American fashion for girls (*Bazar*, September 1, 1965)



**17. "Cvetni trg"  
supermarket (1968)**

**18. Belgrade  
supermarket**  
(*Bazar*, May 11, 1968)



In this book Radina Vučetić shows very vividly how one can understand the different trends of 'appropriation' of certain 'American'/'Western' trends by taking a closer look at certain fields of cultural and social life: cinema and films, jazz and rock'n'roll, Pop-Art and Abstract expressionism, life-style and fashion as well as consumption. But she also offers a careful reevaluation of the limits of 'appropriating' the 'American dream.' Capitalism and democracy was never seen as compatible with socialism, Yugoslavia remained a very much ideologically driven socialist society.

This book is very successful in opening very original insights into both: the appropriation and admiration of 'American culture,' on the one hand, and the wariness and even antagonism against it, on the other.

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In this pioneering book, Radina Vucetic shows how the 'American way of life' and its material emissaries, ranging from film to fashion to music, were received and reworked in 1960s Yugoslavia, with surprising results. She provides a fresh perspective on how and why Yugoslavia's uniquely pivotal place between East and West served as a key testing ground for the making of Cold War culture.

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Central European University Press  
Budapest – New York  
Sales and information: [ceupress@press.ceu.edu](mailto:ceupress@press.ceu.edu)  
Website: <http://www.ceupress.com>  
ISBN 978-963-386-200-1

